

BBC

Inside **Anne Boleyn's** bedchamber

INTIMATE SECRETS OF THE TUDOR COURT



HISTORY

MAGAZINE

BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING HISTORY MAGAZINE

June 2024 / www.historyextra.com

D-DAY'S FORGOTTEN HEROES

How Allied sailors saved the
Normandy landings from disaster

PLUS

**THE AIRBORNE
TROOPS
WHO STRUCK
THE FIRST BLOW**

**Love, war and
dragon-slaying**

How **Viking** poetry
illuminates their world

Club AD 30

Mary Beard explores
ancient Rome's
holiday hotspots



The genius of Cleopatra

How the Egyptian queen outwitted her male rivals



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May Record Highlights*

Haute-Saône, France, Births Marriages, and Deaths,
1603-1929 – **UPDATED**

Australia and New Zealand, Newspapers.com™
Obituary Index, 1800s-current – **UPDATED**

Rhode Island, U.S., Newspapers.com™ Stories and
Events Index – **NEW**

*Record collections subject to change.

“It had taken four long years, but on 6 June 1944 the Allies returned in strength to north-western Europe. Around 150,000 men landed on that day and many more would cross the Channel in subsequent weeks, hammering another nail into the coffin of the Third Reich. **D-Day** is a subject that we’ve covered numerous times in the magazine before, so for the **80th anniversary** we’ve focused on two aspects that perhaps don’t always receive that much attention: **the naval campaign** in the waters close to Normandy, and **the airborne troops** who arrived in the early hours to prepare the ground for the infantry that followed. Historians Nick Hewitt and Saul David will guide you through these dramatic events, beginning on page 20.

And if you’d like to take the story further, then do head over to **HistoryExtra.com** where our team has been busy producing a wealth of additional material to mark the anniversary. Coming soon, we’ve got a new podcast series exploring the events of D-Day on land, sea and air, while the Normandy campaign will also be the subject of our next **HistoryExtra Academy** short course presented by the historian Taylor Downing. It’s all free if you’re a magazine subscriber – and, if you’re not already, then do check out our latest offer on page 52.

We’re also covering a whole raft of other topics in the magazine this month. From **Roman tourism** and **Viking poetry** to **Tudor ladies-in-waiting** and the **trial of OJ Simpson**, there’s plenty to get your teeth into.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Rob Attar

Editor



THREE THINGS I’VE LEARNED THIS MONTH

1. The Norse were coarse

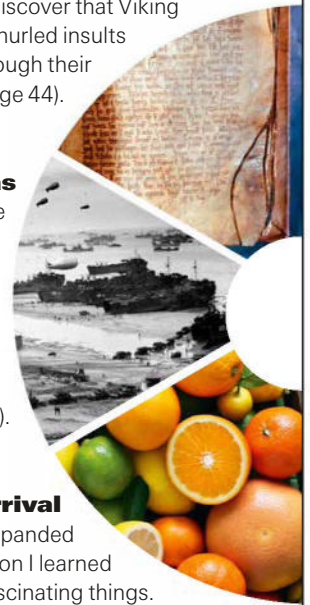
Our piece on Viking poetry highlights the great variety of this artform. I was particularly interested to discover that Viking poets sometimes hurled insults at each other through their verse (page 44).

2. Allied armadas

Nick Hewitt’s article about the D-Day naval campaign reveals the sheer scale of the operation, including the staggering statistic that more than 7,000 Allied ships participated in it (page 26).

3. Late arrival

In our newly expanded Q&A section I learned many fascinating things. I hadn’t known before, for example, that sweet oranges only arrived in Europe in the 16th century (page 36).



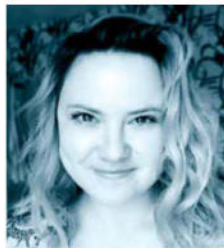
THIS ISSUE’S CONTRIBUTORS



Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones

“I don’t think the story of the Cleopatras is one of seduction per se. This is a story about women harnessing their power in a very patriarchal system.”

Lloyd discusses his new book on the seven queens who shared the name Cleopatra on page 66



Nicola Clark

“Every Tudor queen had ladies-in-waiting. As Henry VIII changed wives, and changed the very fabric of the country’s structure, these women had to make choices about loyalty that simply didn’t exist before.”

Nicola explores what life was like for the ladies-in-waiting to the six wives of Henry VIII on page 54



Saul David

“The history of British airborne forces in the Second World War is distorted by the disaster at Arnhem. But there were also many successes such as Operation Tonga, the vital mission to protect the D-Day beaches.”

Saul tells the story of the airborne troops who struck the first blow on D-Day on page 28



Mary Beard

“The most sought-after holiday destination for Roman emperors and aristocrats was Egypt, and the most alluring method of transport there, then as now, was a Nile cruise.”

Mary reveals why ancient Roman ‘jet-setters’ chose to take their holidays in Egypt on page 46

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Subscriptions & back issues
BBC History Magazine,
PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge,
Northampton, NN4 7BF. Basic
annual subscription rates:
UK: £90.87, EU overseas: € 96,
USA: \$49.95, AUS/NZ: AU\$144
ROW: \$109

In the **US/Canada**:
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Jad Adams reveals how conventional notions of femininity and masculinity were turned on their head in the 1890s



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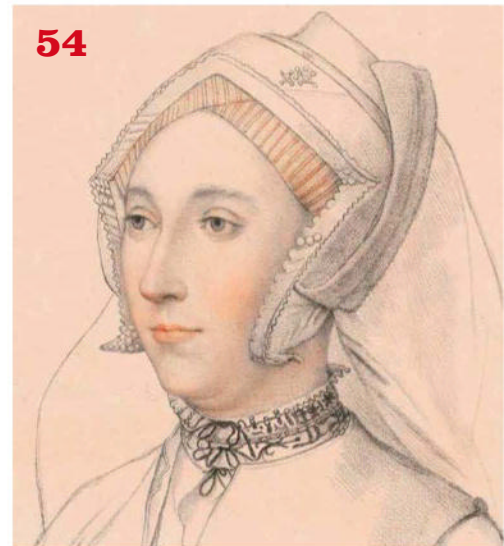
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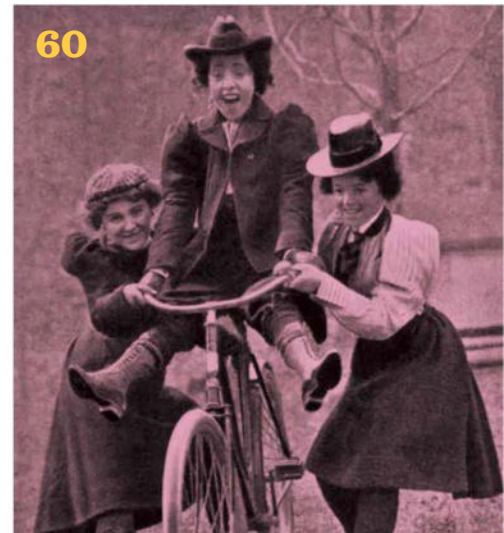
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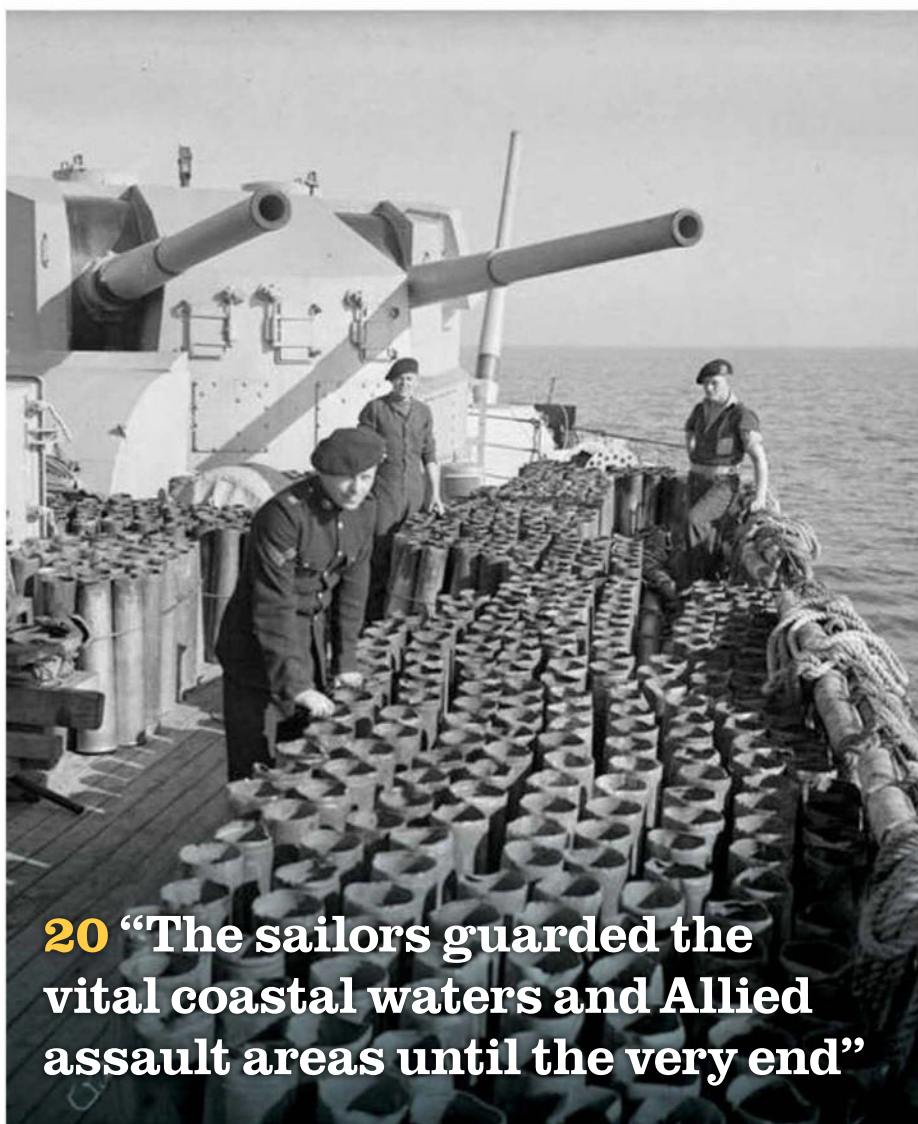


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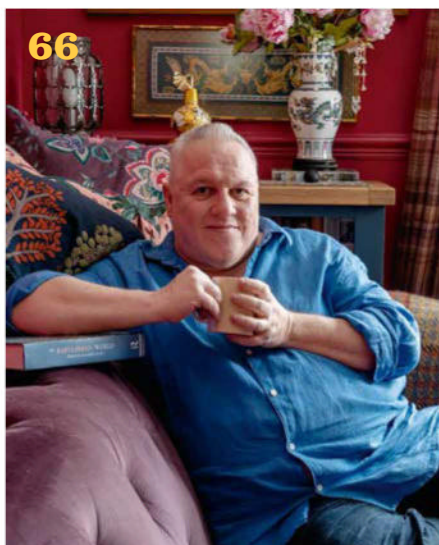


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20 “The sailors guarded the vital coastal waters and Allied assault areas until the very end”

TOP PHOTO: ALAMY / BRIDGEMAN/JENI NOTT



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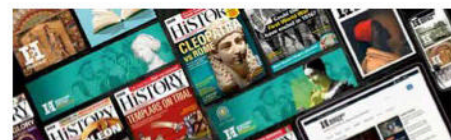
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USPS Identification Statement BBC HISTORY (ISSN 1469-8552) (USPS 024-177) June 2024 is published 13 times a year under licence from BBC Studios by Immediate Media Company London Limited, Vineyard House, 44 Brook Green, Hammersmith, London W6 7BT, UK. Distributed in the US by NPS Media Group, 2 Enterprise Drive, Suite 420, Shelton, CT 06484. Periodicals postage paid at Shelton, CT and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE, PO Box 37495, Boone, IA 50037-0495.

ANNIVERSARIES

DANNY BIRD highlights events that took place in June in history

20 JUNE 1960

The BBC's first female newsreader makes her debut

But Nan Winton faces prejudice

When Nancy Wigginton – better known by her professional name, Nan Winton – appeared on the nation's television sets on 20 June 1960, she became the first woman to present the national news on the BBC.

The corporation's executives had been prompted to conduct this 'experiment' (as it was termed) in response to commercial competition from ITN, where Barbara Mandell had become the UK's first female newscaster in 1955.

Mandell was valued for her personality and individuality, and was seen by the network as the right fit for the family-friendly *Midday News*. In contrast, Winton was deemed suitable for the evening news by her BBC editors thanks to her perceived 'seriousness'. An experienced journalist, she had joined the corporation in the 1950s and had worked on *Panorama* and *Town and Around*. On her first day in the new job, Winton read three news summaries.

A survey conducted at the time by BBC Audience Research about the perception of female news presenters found that most television audiences considered them to be "not acceptable". While the 1960s has gained a reputation as a decade that challenged social conventions, at this point a prevailing attitude held that women were far too frivolous to be entrusted with the sober task of presenting the day's top news stories.

Over the next few months, Winton read the *Six O'Clock News* and weekend bulletins, until the experiment was ended in October. Winton was dropped and ultimately dismissed in March 1961.

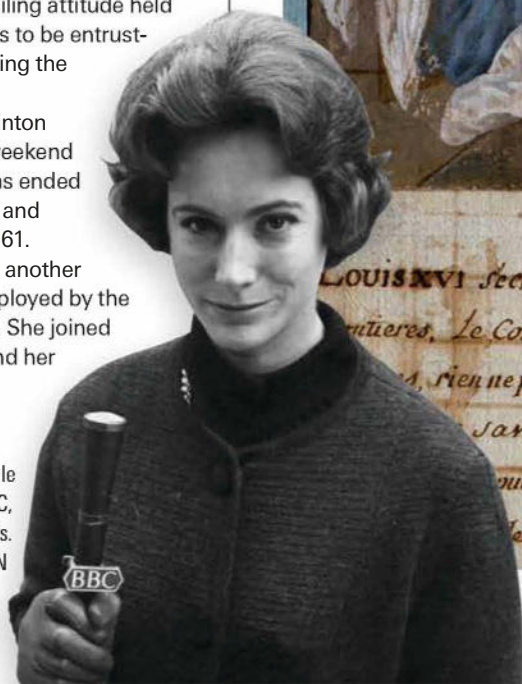
It would not be until 1975 that another woman, Angela Rippon, was employed by the BBC as a regular news presenter. She joined BBC One's *Nine O'Clock News* and her contract was permanent.

Nan Winton, the first female newsreader on the BBC, photographed in the early 1960s. She later worked for ITN

The arrest of Louis XVI in Varennes in 1791, as painted by Jean-Baptiste Lesueur. The king and queen were soon returned to Paris and were subsequently executed in 1793



GETTY/BBC PICTURES



ARRESTATION DE LOUIS XVI
Louis XVI s'échappa des Thuilleries la nuit du 17 Juin 1791. enm...
mèrres, Le Conducteur de la Voiture, s'obstina à vouloir changer de...
rien ne pût l'engager à marcher, D'autres Chevaux ne se trouva...
savoir quels pouvoit être, Ces Voyageurs qui témoignent v...
public; Le Maire vint qui reconnut Le Roi, et lui dit qu'il...
de sa famille rien ne put toucher l'inflexible Maire. Le h...

The Taj Mahal, bathed in morning light and reflected in the Pool of Abundance



17 JUNE 1631

Mughal emperor Shah Jahan orders the **construction of the Taj Mahal in Agra**. It is built in memory of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died during childbirth, and will go on to become a symbol of love and a testament to their eternal bond.

20-21 JUNE 1791

The Flight to Varennes backfires

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette attempt to flee Revolutionary France

Outwardly, Louis XVI was supportive of the radical changes of the French Revolution of 1789. Privately, however, he and Marie Antoinette had been plotting their return to power. They planned to escape Paris for the north-eastern town of Montmédy, where 10,000 troops loyal to the *ancien régime* had mustered, ready for Louis to lead a counter-revolutionary assault.

Holed up at the heavily guarded, dilapidated Tuileries Palace in central Paris, the royal family's movements were under constant supervision. But with the help of Count Axel von Fersen, a Swedish diplomat and rumoured lover of the queen, a single coach was procured to whisk away the royal couple, the dauphin, their daughter and a trusted handful of confidantes.

Shortly before midnight on 20 June, the group climbed into the waiting vehicle. Marie Antoinette assumed the role of governess, while her sister-in-law pretended to be the children's nurse. And Louis was wearing a brown suit and green coat, clothes worn over the preceding 12 nights by the Chevalier de Coigny, who left the palace at the same time each night, to throw the guards off the scent.

To the fugitives' relief, no one realised they had gone and it wasn't until the next morning that their shocking escape was discovered. Alerts were dispatched to posthouses along major routes, including to postmaster Jean Baptiste Drouet in Sainte-Ménéhould. He recognised the disguised royals from a coach that had briefly stopped and raised the alarm.

At Varennes, some 30 miles from its destination, the coach was intercepted and the party was unmasked by a local judge who had served in Versailles and knew the royals.

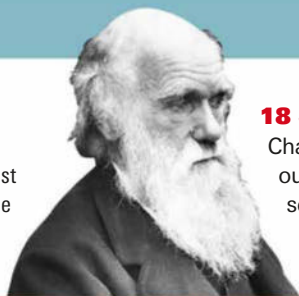
Days later, the king arrived back in Paris to an eerily silent reception from huge crowds. The Marquis de Lafayette, commander of the Paris National Guard, approached Louis for directives, but the king observed: "I seem to be more at your orders than you are at mine."



LOUIS XVI À VARENNES.

...enant la Reine, ses deux Enfants, et sa sœur; Arrivé à Varennes près des chevaux, les siens étant rendus d'avoir courus plusieurs postes, promesses, et... point prêts il fallut s'arrêter à l'auberge: La contestation avoit attirée des spectateurs... tant d'empressement à continuer leur route, et qui se cachotent si soigneusement... ne pouvoit le laisser passer, les promesses les plus séduisantes, les prières, les larmes... loi fut arrêté, et ramené à PARIS le 26.

British naturalist and geologist Charles Darwin, author of the landmark *On the Origin of Species*, pictured in 1869



18 JUNE 1858

Charles Darwin receives a letter from Alfred Russel Wallace outlining a similar theory to his own on evolution by natural selection. This **prompts Darwin to publish his own research**, resulting in both men's findings being presented to the Linnean Society of London on 1 July.

A 1907 oil painting by Catalan artist Antonio Estruch shows the riots of June 1640 in Catalonia, which marked the start of the Reapers' War



7 JUNE 1640

The Reapers' War breaks out

Catalans revolt against the Spanish crown

On Corpus Christi day in 1640, popular unrest in Barcelona ignited into a full-scale uprising. Riots erupted across the city, spearheaded by *segadors* – 'reapers' – who used sickles as weapons.

Amid the chaos, the Viceroy of Catalonia, Dalmau de Queralt, was lynched by the insurgents. They seized control of strategic points, including the city gates, and declared support for the region's independence from Spain. This marked the beginning of the Catalan Revolt, also known as the Reapers' War, which would last until 1659.

Much of Europe throughout the early 17th century was embroiled in the Thirty Years' War, which was essentially a clash of religious, political and territorial tensions between Catholic and Protestant states, exacerbated by dynastic ambitions and power struggles. There were also localised pockets

of violence, and one offshoot was the expansive war that broke out between France and Spain in May 1635. Situated geographically between the two, Catalonia was caught at its centre.

Unrest had long been stirring. In the 1620s, King Philip IV of Spain's favourite, the Count-Duke of Olivares, had initiated the 'Union of Arms', which aimed to mobilise funds and a reserve army of tens of thousands from across Philip's empire – from the Spanish Netherlands to the Kingdom of Sicily. The Catalans, increasingly wary of Castile's (central Spain) hegemony, refused to comply.

Historically tied to the Crown of Aragon, Catalonia had kept several autonomous political institutions under the Spanish monarchy, including a separate system of taxation. And there were other key cultural differences, such as language.

26 JUNE 1945

With World War II still raging in the Pacific, the **United Nations Charter is signed** by 50 nations in San Francisco. The foundational treaty of the UN, it sets forth principles of international cooperation, human rights and security, aiming to prevent future conflicts and promote global peace and prosperity.



The United Nations emblem symbolises the dream of peace and unity



A 19th-century image of American sailors fighting Barbary corsairs on a gunboat deck in 1804

4 JUNE 1805

The First Barbary War ends

The United States makes its first intervention overseas

After five years of fighting, the first conflict fought by the United States of America outside the New World finally ended in 1805. The First Barbary War had been triggered by the practice of piracy and extortion of merchant shipping, with demands for hefty tributes for safe passage, in the Mediterranean by the North African Barbary States (Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli and Morocco). In order to safeguard America's burgeoning maritime trade and to assert the young nation's sovereignty, US President Thomas Jefferson had opted to challenge this state of affairs.

The war unfolded as a series of naval engagements, with the fledgling US Navy confronting the formidable corsairs of the Barbary coast. Under the leadership of Commodore Edward Preble from 1803, the Mediterranean squadron demonstrated remarkable prowess and determination.

In October of that year, the frigate USS *Philadelphia* ran aground off Tripoli. All 307 of its crew were

captured by the local governor, Pasha Yusuf Karamanli, while the vessel was repurposed by the Tripolitans. However, on 16 February 1804, on Preble's orders, Lieutenant Stephen Decatur led a force into Tripoli's harbour under the cover of darkness. They torched the *Philadelphia*, destroying the ship and the enemy's success.

US Marines and mercenaries also successfully besieged the prosperous city of Derna in the Libyan desert, and marked a first when the US flag was raised in triumph on foreign soil.

The turning point towards ending the war came with the successful blockade and bombardment of Tripoli by the American fleet, which compelled Karamanli to sue for peace.

On 4 June 1805, the Treaty of Peace and Amity was signed, leading to an exchange of prisoners and eventually, after a Second Barbary War, the end of tribute to the Barbary States. **H**

Danny Bird is staff writer on BBC History Magazine

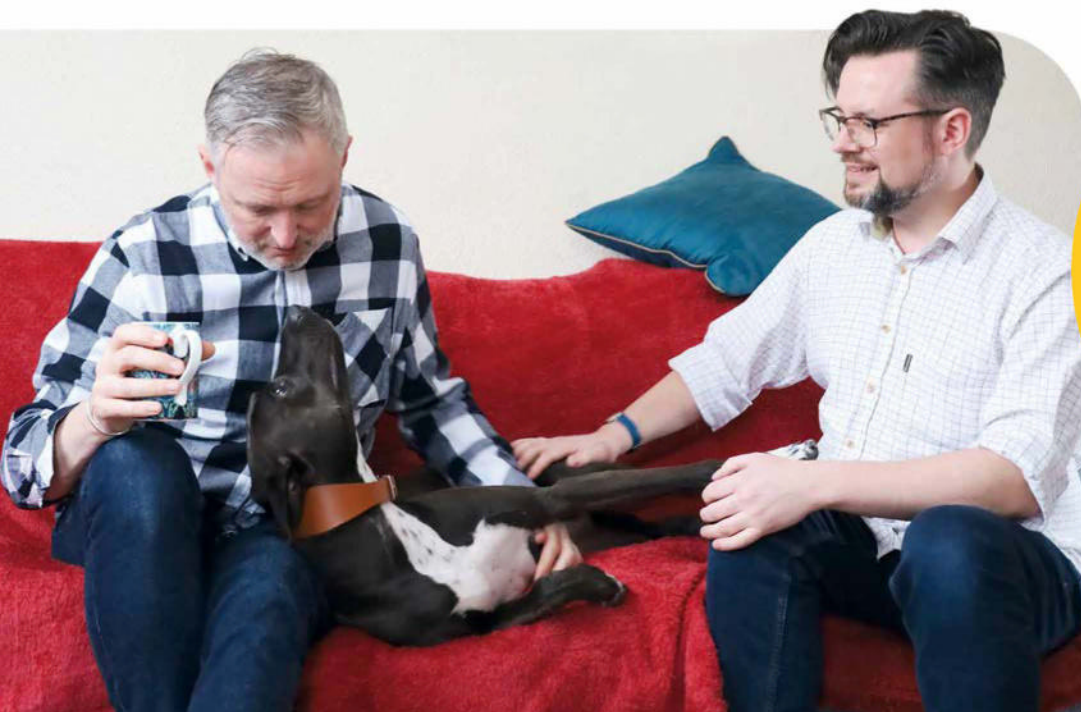
Before long, the region became a theatre of the war itself, with troops billeted in Catalan homes. Reports of sexual assault, property destruction and other transgressions bred outrage. The countryside erupted into open rebellion, and when several members of Catalonia's government were arrested by the Spanish authorities, it culminated in the events of 'Bloody Corpus' in June 1640.

A year later, an independent Catalan republic, which was under de facto French influence, was proclaimed. In 1659, France and Spain signed the Treaty of the Pyrenees, and Catalonia was divided between the Habsburg and Bourbon monarchies.

The memory of this episode of Catalan self-determination was later immortalised in the song *El Segadors* ('The Reapers'), which was formally adopted as Catalonia's anthem in 1993.

Answer the call

HELP DOGS TRUST MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR POOCHES AND OWNERS ACROSS THE LAND BY PARTICIPATING IN ITS ANNUAL NATIONAL DOG SURVEY



TOP DOGS

Labrador Retriever was the single most popular breed in the UK according to 2023's National Dog Survey.

BEAU'S TALE

Dogs Trust specialises in helping pups find their forever home, just like Beau the Lurcher (pictured). Found as a stray at six months old, he quickly bounced back at Dogs Trust Leeds and was rehomed. Sadly, his new owners struggled with his boisterous behaviour and took the difficult decision to return him.

Dogs Trust's Training and Behaviour team boosted Beau's confidence by teaching him simple training tasks like 'Sit', 'Recall', 'Paw' and even 'Go To'. He responded brilliantly, and before long he was ready for a new home again.

In January 2023, David and Mark found his story on the website and were instantly smitten. Following several centre visits to help familiarise themselves and learn the training techniques, Beau moved in with them two months later and is now absolutely thriving.

TURNING WORDS INTO ACTIONS

The National Dog Survey isn't just about snappy stats though. From rehoming to influencing government policy and launching schemes that can change lives for the better, hearing from owners allows Dogs Trust to make good things happen.

In 2021, for example, the need for low-cost training and behaviour advice was highlighted. This led to the creation of the free Dogs Trust Behaviour Support Line, which has already helped more than 8,000 people. The same survey also saw 83% say their dog exhibits at least one undesirable behaviour, so if that sounds like your experience, telling the Dogs Trust about it could help.

Whether you're concerned about the price of pet food or the availability of local walking routes – or even if you don't have a dog, but still have something to say – the survey only takes 15 minutes to complete. So, what's on your mind?

From Boye the poodle, who bravely laid down his life as Prince Rupert's trusty battle companion on Marston Moor in the 17th century, to the legendary Pickles, who found the stolen World Cup trophy on a walk in South London in 1966, Britain has always excelled in celebrating its four-legged friends.

Today, they play a huge part in millions of people's lives up and down the country. So much so, 98% of owners regularly talk to their dog and 47% share their bed with them. These are just some of the fascinating facts to emerge in recent years from the National Dog Survey by Dogs Trust – the UK's largest dog welfare charity. And now's your chance to make sure your voice is heard.



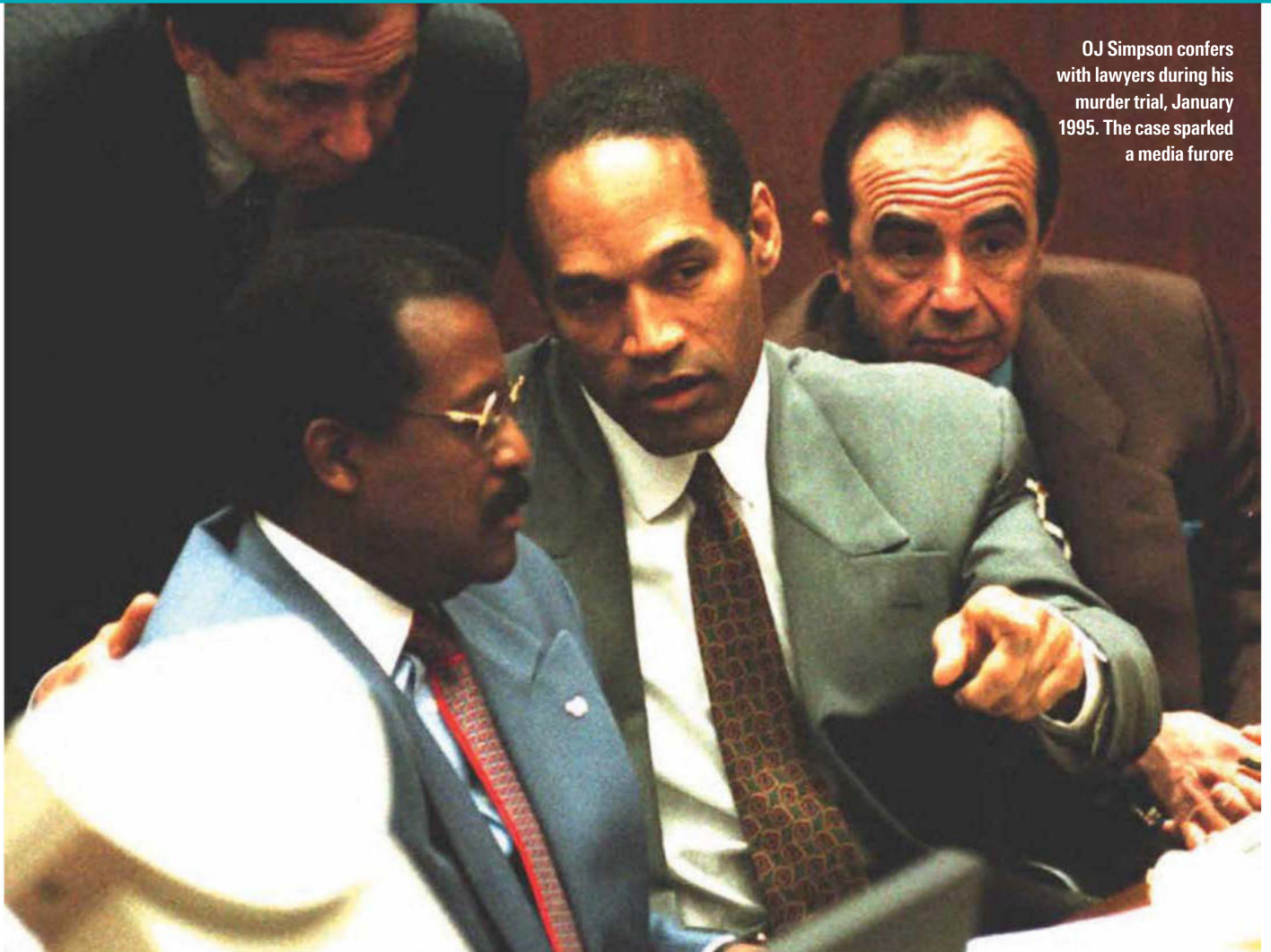
To take part now, search **'National Dog Survey'** or scan the QR code

**2024
National
Dog
Survey**



THE CONVERSATION

EXPERTS DEBATE HISTORY'S BIGGEST ISSUES



OJ Simpson confers with lawyers during his murder trial, January 1995. The case sparked a media furore

BEHIND THE NEWS

“OJ Simpson’s celebrity meant that people were captivated by this story”

Following OJ Simpson’s death in April, **JOE STREET** spoke to Matt Elton about the 1995 murder trial that grabbed the attention of audiences around the world – and what the crime and its aftermath tell us about recent US history

How famous was OJ Simpson in the United States in the mid-1990s?

The fact he was often referred to only by his initials tells us just how famous and popular he was. Simpson had been a star American football player in college and university, and had gone on to become a record-setting running back for the Buffalo Bills team in the 1970s. In more recent years, he had turned to acting, with roles in a number of successful films and a string of adverts for a vehicle rental firm. So he'd become a pop-culture phenomenon as well as one of the most prominent sportsmen in the US. I definitely think that it's easy, 30 years on, to forget the full extent of his celebrity.

Was the fact he was a prominent black athlete a specific dimension to his fame?

Simpson had emerged in the wake of the huge fame of sportsmen such as Muhammad Ali and [basketball star] Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who linked their racial identity with political activism. Simpson was one of the figures who attempted to move beyond that, prefiguring what celebrities including Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan would later do on a larger scale by saying: I'm a brand in myself, and that brand is more important than my racial identity.

In 1985 Simpson had married Nicole Brown, who he'd met in 1977 when she was an 18-year-old waitress. The couple divorced in 1992.

This first half of the 1990s was a period of heightened racial tension in the US. Was that a factor in this story?

It's vital to understand the city that formed the backdrop to these events: Los Angeles. In the mid-1990s, its African-American and white communities lived largely separately. This was partly a result of race, but also class and wealth: African-American people tended to have lower incomes, and tended to be unable to buy in white areas. The city really experienced segregation, even though it wasn't legally codified.



// Black communities had an instinctive understanding that Los Angeles' police department was brutally racist //

The LA police department was renowned for its racism and brutality, too. In 1991, for instance, its officers had been caught on camera viciously beating an African-American man named Rodney King, but were acquitted. That verdict had sparked severe outbreaks of violence around the city, and serve as a vivid illustration of the extent to which LA was a tinderbox during the 1990s. In some ways, it reflected wider trends in the US, but in a particularly heightened way.

On the night of 12 June 1994, Nicole Brown was found stabbed to death alongside her friend Ron Goldman outside her LA home.

Do you think Nicole Brown's story gets overlooked?

Yes, I do. We have a tendency to focus on the celebrity angle, rather than the fact Brown had suffered domestic abuse across a long period, and had confided to friends several times that she feared her husband was going to kill her. In many respects, the case exemplifies the long history of wealth and fame protecting men from the consequences of their actions, particularly when they commit violence against women.

Police who arrived at Simpson's home to inform him of Brown's death found blood on the door and a blood-stained glove, and issued an arrest warrant. On 17 June, Simpson was due to hand himself into police, but instead embarked on a low-speed police chase through LA. Footage was broadcast live around the world.

How new a phenomenon was the rolling-news coverage of the pursuit?

It was a new type of coverage, particularly at this kind of scale [it's estimated that

more than 95 million people tuned in]. The story was perfect for live rolling-news coverage, because the chase went on so long [approximately two hours] and happened so slowly. That meant that word of mouth about the coverage spread, and it was even rumoured that President Clinton was watching. In a way, the chase is a precursor of the kind of memeable moments that we now see so often on social media: you can imagine TikTok or Facebook blowing up with people watching this kind of thing. So, in a sense, it prefigures today's media-saturated cultural landscape.

And it's worth saying that the coverage itself is extraordinary, showing people lining the street and cheering from bridges. Simpson's celebrity meant that people were invested in his story and keen to find out what would happen next – and, of course, some people thought that Simpson had been accused of a crime he hadn't committed.

Did levels of support for Simpson vary between white and black communities?

Polling from the time suggests that the majority of white observers believed Simpson to be guilty, while the majority of African-American observers believed him not to be guilty. But I think part of the reason for the latter of those two trends is that black communities had an instinctive understanding that the police department in Los Angeles – and, indeed, other police departments in the US – was brutally racist.

There was a sense, in some communities, that Simpson was a victim in the same way many other African-American people had been. I think that belief, and that distrust of



Television news footage of Simpson's low-speed chase through Los Angeles on 17 June 1994. The rolling coverage was viewed by almost 100 million people



Simpson and Nicole Brown at a movie premiere in Los Angeles, July 1989. Brown was the victim of long-running domestic abuse by Simpson, which continued after their marriage ended

the police, is where the division actually lay, although it was presented at the time as being simply a racial division. I also think there was a lot more subtlety and variation within African-American responses to the case than has sometimes been suggested.

Simpson's trial began in January 1995, and lasted more than eight months. His defence, known as 'the dream team', included prominent African-American attorney Johnnie Cochran.

How important a figure was Cochran?

Cochran had made his name in cases taking the LAPD to task, including one in which a member of [black power group] the Black Panther Party had been framed for a murder he didn't commit – and, indeed, couldn't have done, because he wasn't even in Los Angeles at the time.

Cochran became a celebrity lawyer around this time, in part because of the Simpson case, but to reduce him to merely a 'celebrity' undercuts the fact that he was very skilful defence attorney. He knew the

// There was a lot more subtlety within African-American responses to this case than is sometimes suggested //

case inside out, and knew how to win people over and persuade juries. In some respects, he became something of a lightning rod for media coverage during the course of the Simpson trial.

A key point of contention in the trial was the extent to which the evidence could be trusted. Why was that so important?

One of the case's most important strands focused on a pair of bloodstained leather

gloves that Simpson was alleged to have been wearing at the time of the murders. The trial hinged on the moment that a prosecuting attorney was goaded by the defence to get Simpson to try on one of these gloves. By that point in proceedings, they had been frozen and defrosted twice to preserve them as evidence – and, of course, the leather had shrunk during that process. In any case, Simpson couldn't get the glove to fit, which led to Cochran's famous quip to the jury: "If it doesn't fit, you must acquit." And, despite the wealth of other evidence that was presented throughout the case, it was those gloves that stuck in jurors' minds.

But there's another dimension to this, too. One of the key prosecution witnesses was Mark Fuhrman, a detective with the LAPD. During the trial, it became clear that Fuhrman had very often used racial epithets, and had boasted of tampering with evidence in previous cases. Even though there was no evidence that he had done so in this case, the fact that he was on the stand having to admit to using racist language, and that he'd had to take the Fifth Amendment [protecting



People celebrating Simpson's acquittal, October 1995. Some commentators felt that Simpson had been able to subvert the legal system, says Joe Street

him from having to testify if that testimony might be self-incriminating] on a couple of occasions, meant that he was seen as being a fundamentally untrustworthy witness.

Simpson was controversially acquitted by the jury on both counts of murder on 3 October 1995.

What was the response to the verdict?

There was joy within the African-American population, because the verdict seemed to prove that a black man could achieve the kind of justice that it was felt had long been the sole preserve of white people. It seemed to some commentators that, because of his wealth and fame, Simpson had been able to subvert a legal system that had historically been geared towards white communities. Some people also felt that the result proved that Los Angeles' police department was fundamentally untrustworthy.

There was also a real fear among white communities that, had Simpson been found guilty, there would have been a recurrence of the kind of violence and scale of unrest that had occurred in the wake of the Rodney King verdict back in 1992.

Did the outcome undermine people's confidence in the US legal system?

For some people, the fact that Simpson had been acquitted based on arguably problematic evidence such as whether the gloves fitted, when plenty of the other evidence was more scientific in nature, was cause for concern. But, of course, it's possible to argue

// One of the case's few positive outcomes was that domestic violence became part of America's national conversation //

that the jurors reacted to evidence that they could respond to emotionally.

For other people, meanwhile, the verdict only served to highlight the fact that experiences of the nation's legal system were strongly dictated by an individual's power, wealth and status, and that only African-American people with Simpson's level of wealth would be able to access justice.

Despite the acquittal, Simpson was found liable for the deaths of Nicole Brown and Ron Goldman in a 1997 civil trial filed by the victims' families.

How did two juries reach two such different verdicts?

Whereas in a criminal trial the prosecution has to prove guilt beyond reasonable doubt – making the burden of proof very high – in a civil trial, jurors are instructed to make their decision based on the balance

of probabilities. What Simpson's lawyers did very well in his criminal trial was to suggest that there were reasonable suspicions that the LAPD had tampered with evidence. That meant it had been very difficult for the jury to convict in a way that wasn't the case with the civil trial.

What do you think the longer-term cultural afterlife of this case has been?

One of its few positive outcomes was that the issue of domestic violence became part of America's national conversation to an extent it hadn't been previously. In September 1994, for instance, US Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act, arguably as a consequence of the horror expressed about Brown's murder – although it was constantly attacked by political opponents in the years afterwards. And the obvious sadness is that it took such a horrific incident for any of this to happen in the first place.

I alluded to this earlier, but a key lesson from this whole episode is the importance of listening to, believing, and telling the stories of victims of domestic violence. Nicole Brown needed to be listened to in the years prior to her death. Had that happened, she may well be alive now, and it's vitally important that we take that into account. **H**



Joe Street is an associate professor in American history at Northumbria University and author of books including the forthcoming *Black Revolutionaries: A History of the Black Panther Party* (University of Georgia Press)



MICHAEL WOOD ON... A CELEBRATION OF BRITISH FEMINISM

// It's packed with jaw-dropping material you never see in mainstream galleries //

.....
Michael Wood
is professor of
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He has presented
numerous BBC
series. His latest
book is *In the
Footsteps of Du Fu*
(Simon & Schuster,
2023). You'll find
him on X at
MichaelWoodMV

B B C

A WONDERFUL EXHIBITION HAS JUST CLOSED at the Tate Britain in London: *Women in Revolt! Art and Activism in the UK 1970–1990*. Exploring British feminism, the show ranges from punk and protest, reproductive rights and the Greenham Common anti-nuclear protests to the Aids epidemic and the formation of the British black arts movement. It offers a wonderfully affecting and wide-ranging portrayal of social history through art, photographs, film, posters, magazines and other material objects. We may enjoy blockbusters on Picasso or Cézanne, but this is art that is about all our lives. As a picture of where we were so recently – and how far we still have to go – it is a brilliant insight, not only into art history but into the dramatic social changes that took place in late 20th-century Britain.

The modern women's liberation movement in the UK began with the famous 1970 Ruskin College conference, which called for equal pay for women, equal education and job opportunities, free contraception and abortion rights and free 24-hour nurseries (which had existed during the Second World War) reminding us what an impact the lack of childcare has on women's lives. "It was a utopian moment," writes Professor Catherine Hall, "the recognition that we shared a feeling and experiences that had a name."

That same year Germaine Greer published her path-breaking critique of the patriarchal order, *The Female Eunuch*. It was also the year of the Equal Pay Act – a start, though it must be said that much remains to be achieved. The next two decades saw a nationwide grassroots femi-

nist movement against the oppressive structures and attitudes that still ruled British society.

That's the story told by the exhibition. It is packed with often jaw-dropping material, the kind you never see in mainstream art galleries. It's sobering to think that the women artists in the show had little or no access to public institutions, private galleries, teaching posts or mainstream publishing; their art with a few exceptions was never seen on TV.

Visceral and moving, bursting with invention and humour, this exhibition vividly re-evaluates women artists' contribution not only to British art in this period, but to social change in this country. Many of its themes explore the links with other struggles, against racism, class oppression, homophobia and nuclear weapons.

And the struggle is not over. The right-wing backlash since the crash of 2008 has seen a swing to authoritarian forms of government in many countries, and to conservative reshaping of knowledge and modes of discourse. In America many of the issues that my student generation of the late sixties demonstrated about are back with a vengeance: feminism, abortion, racial equality. In so many places, funding in education and the arts is being withdrawn from alternative ways of seeing, which are essential in a healthy society.

Can we say 55 years on that the change the feminist movement hoped for has come? Obviously much has changed, and Britain is a better place for it. But going round this exhibition is to see an act of restitution to the courageous women artists and activists who fought so hard, often with so much other pressure on their lives, to say what had to be said: from the Hackney Market Nursery and the Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent to the Grunwick strike.

It also reminds us that the period from the seventies into the eighties, though troubled economically and politically, was very dynamic in new social movements, coming on the end of the post-1945 period when the gap had narrowed between rich and poor.

For the historian there's a great lesson too, and that is how much the mainstream still controls the debate and shapes the narrative. Here though the real history comes bursting out: chaotic, bolshy, humorous, and deeply thought. When the history of our time is written, feminist art will be among the most valuable resources, showing not only how women thought and acted, but above all how they felt.

The exhibition will transfer to the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh for the rest of this year, and then to the Whitworth in Manchester in 2025. Don't miss it! **H**





HIDDEN HISTORIES

KAVITA PURI on a murder that sparked a youth movement

// Gurdip Singh Chaggar's death shook the community deeply //

Kavita Puri

is a journalist and broadcaster for BBC Radio 4 whose history series include *Three Pounds in My Pocket*. She is also the author of *Partition Voices: Untold British Stories* (Bloomsbury, 2019)



IN THE LATE SPRING OF 1976 AN 18-YEAR-OLD boy was walking at night in the Southall area of London near the Victory pub, just opposite the popular Dominion Theatre. He never made it home. The following day, Suresh Grover came across a pool of blood outside the pub. He asked the police officer standing by what happened and was told someone had died the night before. The policeman added: "It was just an Asian."

That young man was Gurdip Singh Chaggar. He was stabbed to death. There's a photo of him in a dark red turban and his school uniform, and he looks so young, his whole life ahead of him. I documented his murder in my BBC Radio 4 series *Three Pounds in My Pocket*. His death was remembered by every British South Asian I spoke to. It shook the community deeply. Many felt it could have been them, or any of their children, if they had been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

It's hard to imagine now, but in those days racism was rife. Words that cannot be openly said today were flung around wantonly. Sometimes these were backed up by violence. The National Front was in its heyday, making its presence felt. A generation of young British South Asians

who had been born and grown up in Britain – this country was their home, even if they were not made to feel that way – had had enough.

Suresh was furious at the policeman's dismissive attitude. He told me he covered the blood with a piece of red cloth and put bricks around it as a sign of respect, so no one would walk over it. He erected a makeshift sign to say someone had died.

As word spread of Chaggar's murder, Suresh, along with hundreds of others, spontaneously took to Southall's streets to protest against racism and his killing. Suresh recalls the police trying to stop them. While they marched, the blood of Gurdip Singh Chaggar had still not been cleared up.

An excellent and important new Channel 4 documentary series called *Defiance* charts – for the first time on British television – the fightback in Southall and around the country that began with Chaggar's killing.

In the first episode, I saw, for the first time, news footage from the day after Chaggar's murder. You can see his blood spattered on the ground and all the way up the pavement's railings. It's chilling. What's even more heartbreaking is that in an interview with Chaggar's brother, he says he and his father had been out looking for him when he didn't come home. They saw the blood, and his father recited a Sikh prayer for whoever was hurt, not knowing then that it was his youngest son.

Days after the killing, Suresh went on to become one of the founding members of the Southall Youth Movement. They wanted to protect the community against racism, but also they felt many in the police were not on their side. Their slogan was "come what may, we're here to stay". Other youth movements sprang up across the country. In the coming years, along with their supporters, which included members of the black community, these movements would see confrontations, even street battles with the National Front and those who backed its far-right ideology. These took place in areas with large ethnic minority communities like Southall, Bradford and Lewisham.

A group of white men attacked Chaggar. A 17-year-old and an 18-year-old pled guilty to his manslaughter and received sentences of four years. The presiding judge said, "I am quite satisfied that none of you were activated by feelings of racial prejudice." There was widespread unhappiness in the British South Asian community at the lenient sentences and the fact that the killing was not called racist.

Gurdip Singh Chaggar was not the only British South Asian to be killed by racists in the 1970s. His death sparked a movement where a younger generation no longer tolerated the perpetual harassment and questioning of their existence in Britain. Nearly 50 years on, it's a history still not known widely in Britain.

Today, Southall has a plaque to remember the killing, and it bears his name. He was not "just an Asian". ■



Schoolboy Gurdip Singh Chaggar, who was murdered at the age of 18 in Southall



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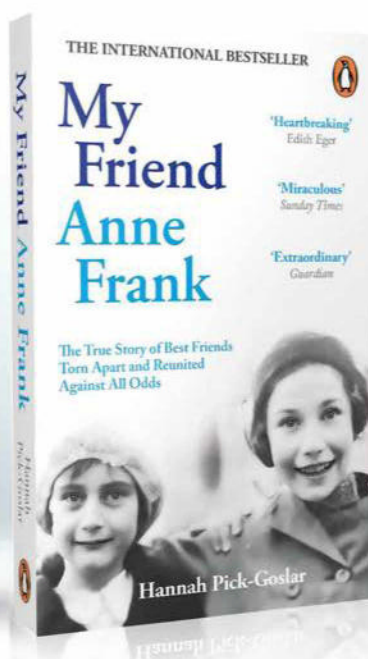


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LETTERS



A portrait of campaigner Caroline Norton. Reader Ian MacDonald praises her achievements

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Out of the blue

Having lived in Cumbria for years, I enjoyed the article on *The Forgotten Kingdom* (May). I was particularly interested in the comments about William Rufus's army, because it relates to my favourite place on Earth.

As you approach Buttermere, at the head of a valley into the Lake District, the road runs right beside Crummock Water. A fell projects out near to the water, making the road take a sharpish bend out of sight. In front of the fell is Bluebell valley.

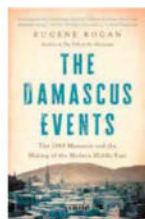
Legend has it that on hearing about the approach of William's army in 1092, the local people hastened to destroy the existing road and build a side road in front of the jutting-out fell, in the hope that the army would be diverted into this wild and lonely valley. There they waited, hiding behind boulders and trees, until they could take William's army by surprise. Many were slaughtered, but Buttermere village was saved.

In the spring, the valley is full of bluebells, covering the ground in swathes of blue. It's said that the soil was enriched by dead bodies beneath the ground – and so, despite this rather gruesome tale, the valley is now a place of great beauty and peace.

Elizabeth Horder, Brighton



Bluebells growing around Crummock Water. Their beauty, reader Elizabeth Horder suggests, may have dark roots



We reward the Letter of the Month writer with a copy of a new book. This issue, that's **The Damascus Events** by Eugene Rogan. Read our review on page 70

Ancient atrocities

The feature on slavery (*The Invisible Romans*, May) makes clear that the ancient Romans are today regarded in a far better light than they deserve. Although unquestionably skilled at civil engineering, for centuries they operated what was effectively a military dictatorship which attempted genocide in Carthage and Gaul, and which treated those who defied it with unimaginable cruelty, murdering, mutilating and enslaving them while enforcing domestic tyranny with vicious punishments such as crucifixion.

Despite describing Rome's opponents as barbarians, they were themselves organised, disciplined savages. If they existed today, they would be regarded as more bestial than any other regime barring the Nazis.

Their only redeeming feature was that, thanks to the conversion of Constantine, the empire was instrumental in enabling Christianity to become a global religion, the values of which were the antithesis of those of Rome.

Colin Bullen, Kent

Beyond the scandal

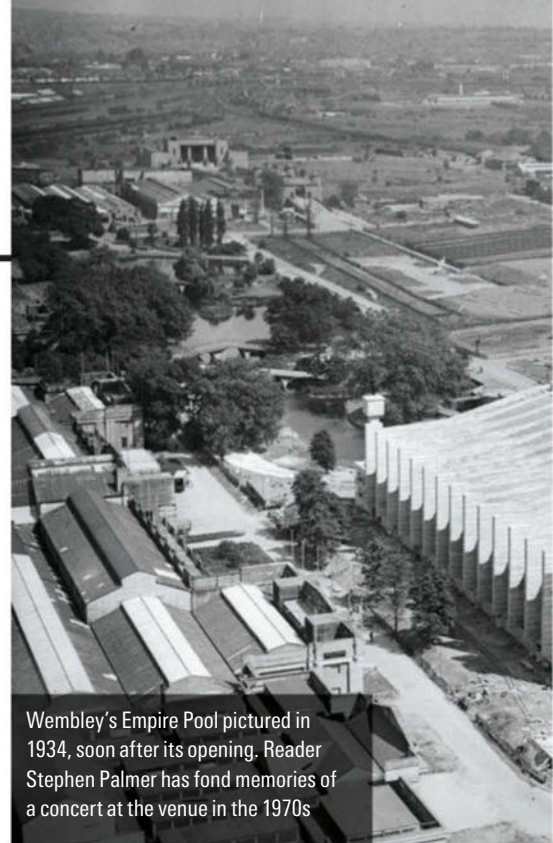
Despite her involvement in the "mother of sex scandals" (*Sex, Sadism and Sugared Death*, May) and other love affairs, history rightly prefers to remember Caroline Sheridan (later Norton) as a social reformer who campaigned successfully to change the law regarding women's rights and the custody of children after divorce. Her achievement is celebrated in the House of Lords, where she is modelled on the figure of Justice in an allegorical fresco, and with a blue plaque outside her former Mayfair home.

The enactment of the new laws for which she fought, however, marked the end of any further activism. In *The Times* she wrote: "The natural position of woman is inferiority to man... That is a thing of God's appointing, not of man's devising. I believe it sincerely, as part of my religion. I never pretended to the wild and ridiculous doctrine of equality."

Ian MacDonald, Essex

Stable and balanced

I was disappointed to read the line "The past after all is always changing" in Michael Wood's April column, which ran under the subtitle "The Power of Good History". While the past is constantly expanding, nothing else about it changes: words said cannot be unsaid, deeds cannot be undone. Our knowledge of, and understanding of, the past may change, but the past itself most emphatically does not.



Wembley's Empire Pool pictured in 1934, soon after its opening. Reader Stephen Palmer has fond memories of a concert at the venue in the 1970s

'Good' is also a very subjective term.

My own idea of 'good history' is one in which a subject is discussed via balanced presentation of demonstrable facts, speculation is used only as an aid to uncovering those facts, and subjective comments are clearly separated. In fact I think I would prefer history to be approached more as a science than an art.

Robert Whiteman, Isle of Man

Empire records

One of my interests besides history is going to see bands play live, and I've kept quite a few of the ticket stubs. They're displayed

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➤ Page 52



in a frame in my hall – including one for the Electric Light Orchestra (ELO) in 1978. The venue was the Empire Pool, Wembley, which had opened in the 1930s and is now usually known as the Wembley Arena. I've always wondered about the original name printed on the ticket, however.

So your article on the 1924 British Empire Exhibition (*The Empire's Last Hurrah?*, May) brought it to life for me. Clearly, 100 years have now passed since the exhibition, but the concept of empire was still lingering in 1978. Borrowing from ELO songs, some would say that empire is still a 'Livin' thing' – but, for the rest of us, 'It's over'.

Stephen Palmer, London

Bare necessities

When reading April's *Explore* article on the Cerne Abbas giant, I did a double take to discover that he "bears all". The only thing he is bearing – or rather, brandishing –

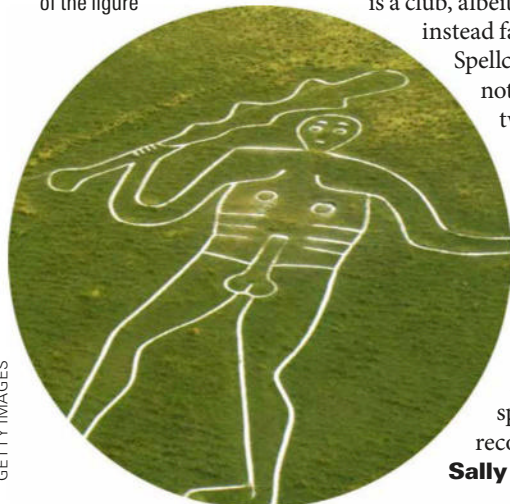
is a club, albeit a large one. He is instead famous for *baring* all.

Spellchecking software is not much help if there are two words which look and sound similar but which have different meanings!

As for autocorrect, it can help with spelling, but I have started referring it to it as 'auto incorrect' when it alters my spelling if it does not recognise the word!

Sally Giffen, Bicester

The Cerne Abbas Giant. Reader Sally Giffen raises an objection about our description of the figure



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Vol 25 No 6 – June 2024
 BBC History Magazine is published by Immediate Media Company London Limited under licence from BBC Studios who help fund new BBC programmes.

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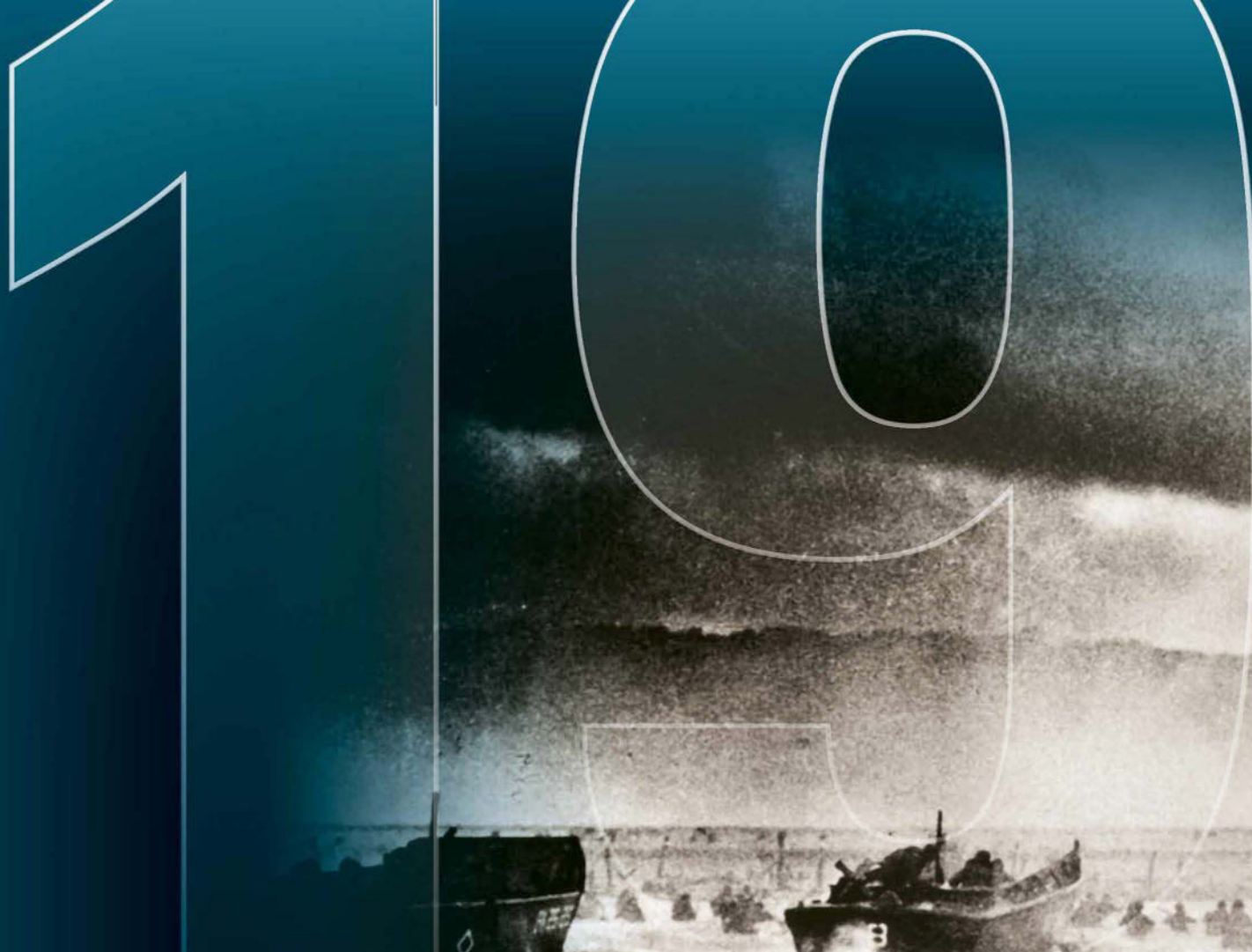
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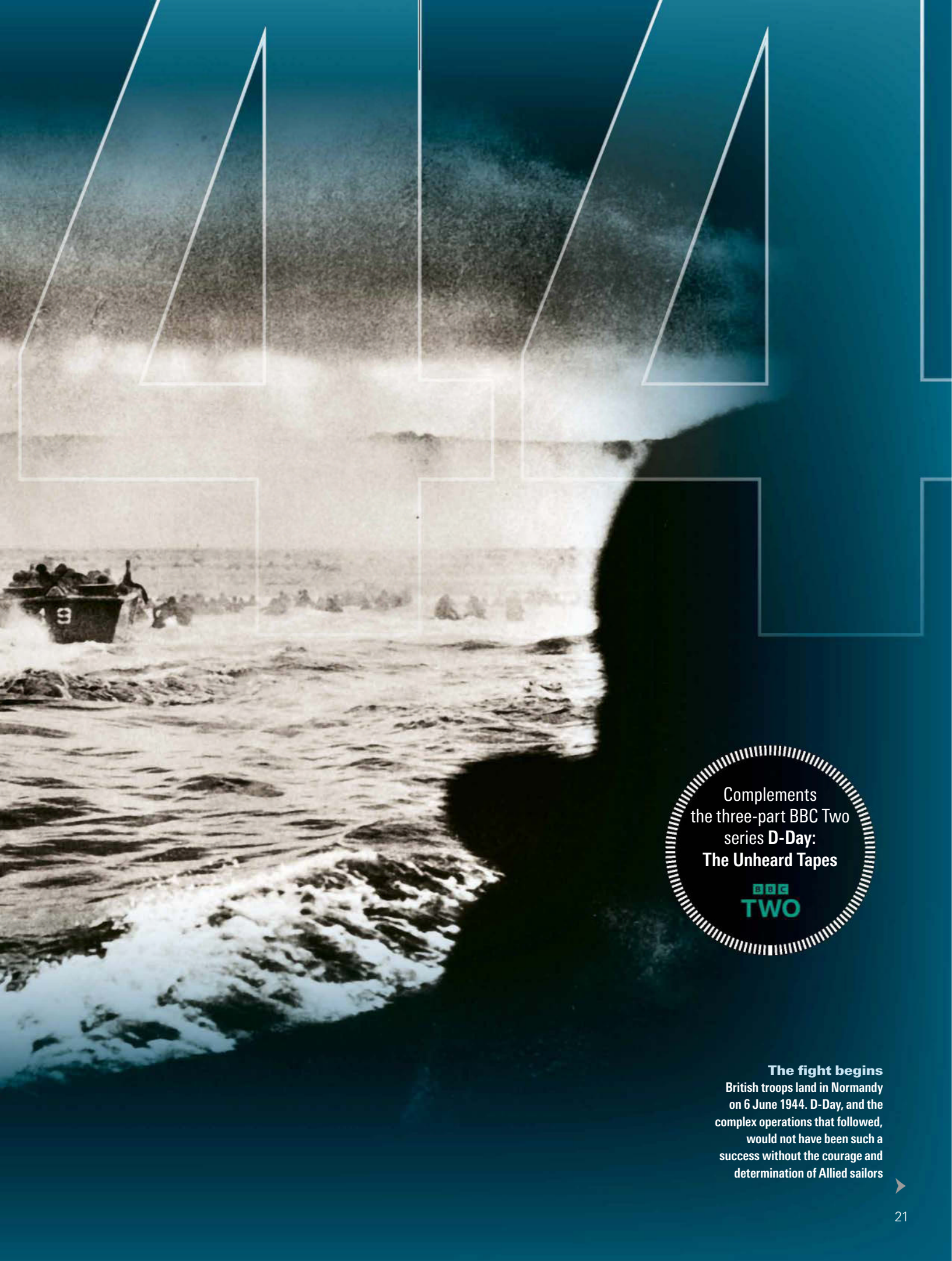
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NORMANDY'S FORGOTTEN HEROES

Ferrying troops to the beaches wasn't the only contribution sailors made during the Allied invasion of Normandy. In the first of two special features marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day, **NICK HEWITT** reveals how the Allied navies ended up fighting one of the most overlooked campaigns of the Second World War



Complements
the three-part BBC Two
series **D-Day:**
The Unheard Tapes

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TWO

The fight begins

British troops land in Normandy
on 6 June 1944. D-Day, and the
complex operations that followed,
would not have been such a
success without the courage and
determination of Allied sailors

On 30 July 1944, nearly two months into the Allied invasion of northern France, Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay reflected on his command of the naval operations so far. "It may seem to some people that it was all easy and plain sailing," he wrote in his diary. "[But] nothing could be more wrong. It was excellent planning and execution." Ramsay died in 1945 without leaving a full memoir, but thousands of sailors could testify that nothing about their lives was "easy and plain sailing". As late as 8 August 1944, with Allied troops poised to smash the German army in Normandy, sailors were still fighting to protect the beachhead. On that same day, the German submarine *U-667* torpedoed both the US freighter *Ezra Weston* and the Canadian corvette *HMCS Regina*, the latter attack claiming the lives of 30 men.

Ramsay's words were prophetic. Today, discussions regarding sailors during the Normandy campaign mainly focus on their actions during the first day of the invasion: 6 June 1944, or 'D-Day'. They are often absent from the wider story, despite the exhausting and dangerous campaign they fought to seize, exploit and defend the waters around Normandy throughout the summer of 1944.

The focus of the campaign was the Baie de la Seine, or Seine Bay, the huge inlet of the English Channel stretching nearly a hundred kilometres along the coast of Normandy from Le Havre in the east to the tip of the Cotentin Peninsula at Cape Barfleur in the west. Within the bay lay the five assault areas or so-called 'beaches': Utah and Omaha for the Americans, and Gold, Juno and Sword for the British and Canadians. Through this

highly congested and vulnerable body of water passed a constant stream of transport ships carrying supplies and reinforcements, without which the military could not hope to win the more widely recognised battle of Normandy on land.

Defeat was unlikely, but any setback could have prolonged the war for months. As the Allied commander-in-chief, General Dwight Eisenhower, recognised in his final report: "For the successful maintenance of the armies in France... we were dependent upon the ceaseless work of the Allied navies, assisted by RAF Coastal Command."

The countdown to D-Day

Normandy had been confirmed as the site for the Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe at the Quebec Conference, codenamed 'Quadrant', in August 1943. Two months later, Ramsay was appointed Naval Commander-in-Chief, Expeditionary Force, with the rest of the command team appointed in December. The overall commander-in-chief was Eisenhower, and the military and air commanders were General Sir Bernard Montgomery and Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory. With the leadership structure in place, Ramsay then issued his Naval Operation Plan for Operation Neptune, the invasion's assault phase, on 28 February 1944.

While the planners worked, extraordinary efforts were made to assemble the huge fleet required for the invasion. Royal Navy officer Christopher Clitherow, for instance, commissioned a new Landing Ship (Tank), or LST, which would help transport men and vehicles across the Channel. Created using innovative mass production methods in the US, the vessels resembled welded steel shoeboxes, and offered very little in the way of comfort. "She reacts to a bump like a



diving board off which one has just jumped," Clitherow later recalled. "Every conceivable piece of the ship rattles as if its teeth were about to fall out."

Meanwhile, the sheer number of men required to deliver Neptune meant that most new British recruits were posted to Combined Operations, which had been founded in July 1940 to plan and carry out amphibious warfare. They were put through their paces at special centres across the UK, before joining their units and taking part in huge pre-assault exercises. Exercise Tiger, held on 26–28 April, saw the most significant setback of the

TIMELINE How the Allied navies turned the tide in Normandy

17–24 August 1943

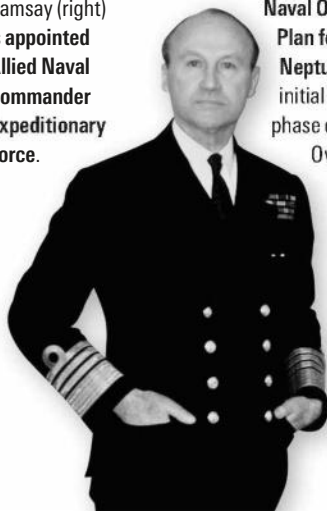
The Quebec Conference (codenamed 'Quadrant') takes place in Canada. Allied leaders decide that the liberation of Nazi-occupied Europe, Operation Overlord, will begin with an assault landing in Normandy.



Quadrant attendees included Franklin D Roosevelt (second left) and Winston Churchill (second right)

25 October 1943

Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay (right) is appointed Allied Naval Commander Expeditionary Force.



28 February 1944

Ramsay issues the Naval Operation Plan for Operation Neptune – the initial assault phase of Operation Overlord.

28 April 1944

Nearly 750 men are killed in a German E-boat attack at Slapton Sands, Devon, during Exercise Tiger – one of the final rehearsals for the seaborne invasion.

A US Sherman tank serves as a memorial to the men killed during Exercise Tiger



GETTY IMAGES/IWM



Command team

The invasion's supreme commander, General Dwight Eisenhower (centre), with his deputy, RAF Air Marshal Arthur Tedder (left), and ground forces commander General Sir Bernard Montgomery

Back to school

New naval recruits underwent months of intense training ahead of Operation Neptune, both at sea and on land



Heavy weaponry

Men on board HMS *Sirius* stand alongside the casings of shells fired from the ship's 5.25-inch guns. The light cruiser provided vital gunfire support in the Sword area

training cycle, when a convoy of American LSTs making a practice landing at Slapton Sands, Devon, was attacked by German motor torpedo boats (also known as 'E-boats'), killing 749 US servicemen and wounding more than 300 others.

Yet despite this tragic turn of events, Operation Neptune officially began at 11.30pm on 25 May, when commanders opened Ramsay's sealed orders and military camps in southern England were closed off to the outside world. D-Day itself was scheduled for Monday 5 June, but after an unseasonal summer gale, it was determined that the invasion would instead be pushed back to Tuesday 6 June.

The new vessels resembled welded steel shoeboxes, and offered very little in the way of comfort

After setting out on the 5th, the armada passed along the south coast and turned out into the Channel, with most of the ships passing Area Z, a buoyed patch of water south-east of the Isle of Wight nicknamed 'Piccadilly Circus'. From there, the vessels then passed down the 'Spout' – 10 marked and mine-swept channels – into their designated assault areas. Sweeping and marking this huge stretch of sea was fraught with danger. When the US Navy minesweeper *Osprey* struck a mine, caught fire and sank, the five sailors and one officer who lost their lives became Neptune's first deaths in action.

Arriving off Normandy, bombarding warships subdued the German coastal

6 June 1944

The Allied invasion of Normandy begins. Known as D-Day, the first day of the campaign sees **132,715 British, Canadian and American soldiers coming to shore across five landing beaches**, with a further 23,400 airborne troops dropping further inland.

25 June 1944

The US-led Task Force 129 **bombards Cherbourg** in support of a US Army assault on the city.

3 July 1944

Operation Neptune comes to an end. The last of the senior officers leading the assault are withdrawn and new headquarters are established ashore.

5/6 July 1944

Human torpedoes of the German Navy's *Kleinkampfverbände* (small battle units) **launch their first attack on the Allied assault area.** Two minesweepers and the British frigate HMS *Trollope* are sunk.

12 September 1944

With much of the fighting now moving further inland, **British troops finally take the German naval base at Le Havre.** Three months and six days after D-Day, combat operations for the Allied navies in the Seine Bay come to an end.



Men of the US 1st Infantry Division wade into action on the morning of D-Day, seconds after emerging from their Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel, or LCP

D-Day / The seaborne invasion

defences while soldiers got ashore. Warships provided an overwhelming advantage on the battlefield, but bombardment was exhausting work – and quite different to the stop-start nature of conventional naval action. Gordon ‘Putty’ Painter, a 20-year-old gunlayer aboard the cruiser HMS *Belfast*, would later recall firing broadsides that rocked the ships “backwards and forwards” for hours on end. In fact, such were the demands of the operation that the only time that Painter and his comrades could leave the turret “was if nature called”.

Gaining a foothold

Naval bombardment would prove instrumental to ensuring D-Day’s success, particularly within the American Omaha area, where destroyers operating dangerously close inshore helped the army establish a precarious beachhead. But the fire support came at a cost: two destroyers, the Norwegian *Svenner* and USS *Corry*, were both sunk with heavy loss of life, the former by German torpedo boats and the latter by coastal defence guns.

Meanwhile, more sailors carried assault troops to the shore in landing craft – and their experiences were often extraordinary. George Kirkby, for example, was the coxswain of a Landing Craft (Assault) launched from HMS *Prinses Astrid*, one of several converted Belgian ferries that was tasked with delivering British commandos and US Rangers. Later, he would describe a beach “strewn with dead and wounded bodies, the air thick with smoke and the water around us spraying up into the craft through concentrated mortar and machine gun fire”.



Ready to roll British tanks and trucks are transferred from a Landing Ship (Tank) to a motorised raft known as a Rhino Ferry. Huge numbers of vehicles were transported across the Channel for the push inland

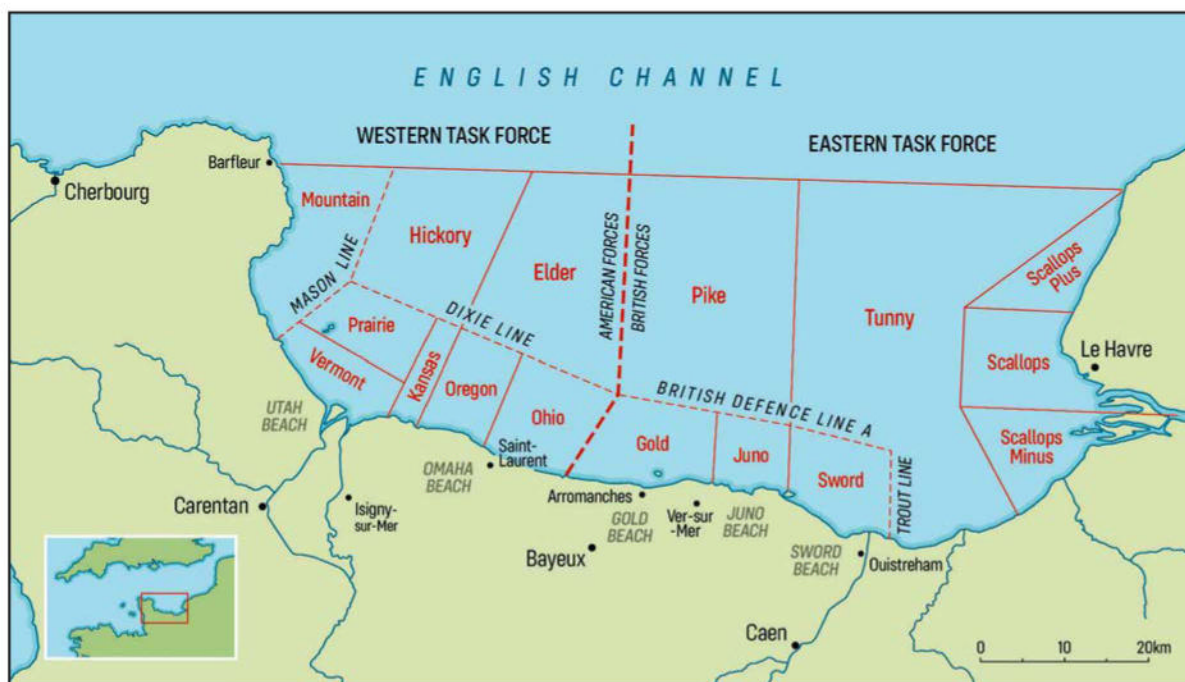
The initial follow-up forces also landed in assault craft, but from 10 June onwards, the focus of Operation Neptune switched to methodical logistics, with at least eight convoys of merchant ships sailing across the Channel every 24 hours. The process was remarkably efficient: allowing for loading and unloading, any individual ship could make a round trip from England to France in just four days. They not only brought in fuel, vehicles, ammunition and reinforcements, but they also took out

wounded Allied soldiers and German prisoners of war.

Once the ships had arrived, there were several methods of getting supplies into the beachhead itself. The first method was to bring everything over the beaches or from anchorages offshore, using assault craft and barges, while the second was to make use of the small harbours captured in the landings. The third option, meanwhile, was to utilise the two huge artificial harbours known as ‘Mulberries’ that the Allies constructed off

All mapped out

The invasion force was split into two commands: the American Western Task Force and the British Eastern Task Force. Like the assault areas, open water was also divided into codenamed sections





Trouble ahead

A wave of US troops lands on Omaha beach, several hours into D-Day. Sailors were responsible for guiding landing craft to the shore, often under heavy fire

Saint-Laurent in the Omaha area and Arromanches in Gold.

Assembly of the harbours began as soon as the beaches were secured, with sailors playing a leading role. Able Seaman Kenneth Bungard, for example, crossed the Channel riding on one of the prefabricated concrete caissons used to create the harbours' walls. Crawling along on a slab-sided monster with the seakeeping qualities of a house brick was far from pleasant. "If we were hit with a torpedo, that would be the end," he recalled. "It was all concrete [and] it would just disintegrate."

The coming storm

All this vulnerable shipping had to be protected. In the Eastern (British) Task Force area, the defence was largely static to reduce the risk of collisions and friendly fire. Defence Line A, consisting of anchored mine-sweepers, ran along the assault area, six miles offshore, to guard against attacks from the north, while a line of armed landing craft and Coastal Forces craft (later christened the 'Trout Line') ran south to the shore, watching the German naval base at Le Havre. Elsewhere, in the Western (US) Task Force area, destroyers, patrol craft and British steam gunboats patrolled the 'Dixie Line', which ran parallel to the coast to meet Defence Line



Like a duck to water

Allied troops pictured in an amphibious truck (known as a DUKW or 'duck') alongside the Mulberry harbour at Arromanches. Such vehicles could reach the beachhead quickly and efficiently

A. Radar-equipped destroyers patrolled south of this, and more Coastal Forces craft watched the 'Mason Line', which ran up the Cotentin Peninsula to the northern edge of the Utah area.

Despite these formidable lines of defence, enemy attacks continued apace. E-boats and other German warships frequently sortied

NORMANDY IN NUMBERS

Key statistics from the Allied naval campaign

7,016 ships and major landing craft participated in Operation Neptune. Approximately 79 per cent of the vessels were either British or Canadian



Around 21,400 Canadians – including the troops shown here – landed on Juno beach on D-Day

195,701 naval personnel were involved in Operation Neptune

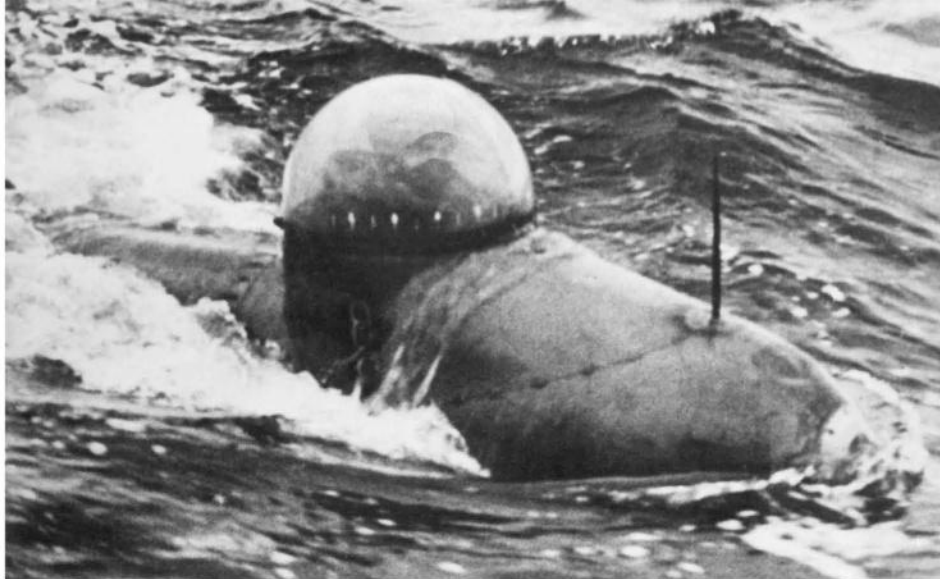
917 Allied ships and major landing craft were lost or seriously damaged between 6 and 30 June 1944

509 German mines, of all types, were swept in the Allied assault areas between 4 June and 3 July 1944

183,540 vehicles had been landed in the British and US sectors by 4 July 1944 – the day after Operation Neptune officially came to an end



More than 180,000 vehicles had arrived in Normandy by the end of Operation Neptune



Small but deadly The German Navy's *Kleinkampfverbände* arrived in the Seine Bay in July 1944, using hard-to-detect craft such as human torpedoes (above) to attack Allied ships

from Le Havre and Cherbourg, trying to strike the supply ships or lay mines, while the Luftwaffe carried out bombing and torpedo attacks almost every night. On one particularly bad day, 8 June, three US warships went down to mines, while the British lost the frigate HMS *Lawford* to a remote-controlled glider bomb. Elsewhere, another Luftwaffe raider hit a huge petrol and ammunition stores dump in the Sword area.

On 14 June, an increasingly concerned Admiral Ramsay asked for RAF strategic bombers to strike Le Havre, and they duly responded, sinking three of the German Navy's large torpedo boats and 10 E-boats. Yet there was more turmoil to come. A few days later, the worst summer storm in living memory swept through the Seine Bay, halting the fighting and delivery of supplies until late on 22 June. The Mulberry harbour at Saint-Laurent was smashed beyond repair, while more than 800 vital ferry craft were left stranded. The churning water also triggered the sensitive detonators on German pressure-operated 'oyster' mines, which blew up unexpectedly across the assault area.

Once the storm had passed, the US Army attacked Cherbourg on 22 June, while a naval task force bombarded the defences on the 25th in support. This time, the German gunners were ready to respond, and all but one of the seven battleships and cruisers taking part were hit. US Rear-Admiral Carleton Bryant's flagship USS *Texas* came under particularly heavy fire, with one shell smashing the battleship's bridge structure, killing the helmsman and wounding several others. "Having 11-inch

shells fired at you is no fun," Bryant later recalled. "When the salvo hits the water there is the most ungodly smack you ever heard."

Cocaine and amphetamines

Cherbourg surrendered on 26 June, but the submarine and air attacks continued, as did the minelaying, and July saw the arrival of the *Kleinkampfverbände* – the German Navy's 'small battle units'. The first weapons to turn up at Villers-sur-Mer near Le Havre were explosive motorboats and craft known as 'human torpedoes', ridden into action by young volunteers whose confidence was boosted by cocaine and amphetamines. Twenty-six human torpedoes attacked on the night of 5/6 July, and although 10 were lost, they succeeded in sinking two minesweepers and the frigate HMS *Trollope*. Two nights later, the *Kleinkampfverbände* returned and sank the old Polish cruiser ORP *Dragon* with the loss of 37 officers and men.

Despite the constant pressure from sea and air, the vital supply build-up continued at an impressive rate. By 14 July, a million tons of stores and nearly 300,000 vehicles had been put to shore, and on 25 July, the US First Army was able to break out of the beachhead and race into France. The western flank of the assault area was now secure, and the fleet started to operate further west, blockading German bases in the Bay of Biscay and destroying evacuation convoys.



Le Havre lies in ruins after being bombed and captured by the Allies on 12 September 1944. The port city had been a key German naval stronghold

Time's up

German prisoners of war are marched out of Cherbourg in late June 1944. The US Army's assault on the city was accompanied by a major Allied naval bombardment



The real story behind D-Day

Nick Hewitt is a guest on our forthcoming podcast series on the Normandy landings. Find out more at historyextra.com/podcast



On the eastern flank, however, Le Havre remained an enemy stronghold. On the night of 30/31 July, German E-boats struck the Allied convoy FTM53 with long-range pattern-running torpedoes, hitting five freighters. Although only one of the freighters, SS *Samwake*, actually sank, none of the others went to sea again. *Samwake*'s captain, Owen John, described his ship's end in a melancholy report: "She dipped by the head, the stern reared up vertically and held for a few minutes, then very slowly she rolled over to starboard and disappeared at 0545 in a small fountain of water."

Alarming, there were more losses to come. As well as the aforementioned HMCS *Regina*, further Allied casualties included the hospital ship *Amsterdam*, which was mined and sunk on 7 August, claiming the lives of 55 patients, 10 Royal Army Medical Corps staff, 30 members of the crew and 11 prisoners of war. Among the dead were military nurses Mollie Evershed and Dorothy Field, the only women named on the British Normandy Memorial in the village of Ver-sur-Mer. Later, the cruiser *Frobisher* was torpedoed and damaged on the 9th, and the

By 14 July 1944, a million tons of stores and nearly 300,000 vehicles had been put to shore

valuable repair ship HMS *Albatross* was torpedoed on the 11th with the loss of 67 naval and military personnel.

It wasn't until 12 September, with the land fighting far away, that the British captured Le Havre and the complex infrastructure of the Seine Bay was dismantled. More than three months after D-Day, the naval campaign was finally over.

Looking back at the events nearly 80 years on, the sailors who served should not be remembered as mere taxi drivers, ferrying men and supplies to the shore, but as active

combatants who guarded the vital coastal waters and Allied assault areas until the very end. Whether by day or by night, they maintained a ceaseless watch against all manner of threats – and in some cases, ended up paying with their lives. Counting casualties is not an exact science for a campaign that has never been studied coherently, but nearly 3,000 Allied sailors are known to have died in the operations in and around the Seine Bay – and possibly many more. As General Sir Bernard Montgomery would write in May 1945, "any success achieved by the British Armies has been made possible only by the magnificent support given us by the Royal Navy". **H**

Nick Hewitt is a naval historian. His most recent book is *Normandy: The Sailors' Story – A Naval History of D-Day and the Battle for France* (Yale University Press, 2024)



A new three-part BBC Two series about the Normandy landings, **D-Day: The Unheard Tapes**, will be airing in June. For further details, turn to page 82





The spearhead of the invasion

Hours before the assault on Normandy's beaches got under way, British airborne troops launched an attack on targets in the French countryside. At stake, writes **Saul David**, was the success of the entire D-Day landings



Winged warriors Troops in an Airspeed Horsa glider at RAF Brize Norton. They were among 30,000 airborne soldiers recruited to launch precision strikes on occupied Europe, and would play a critical role in Operation Overlord

The 28 men of D Company, 2nd Ox and Bucks Light Infantry sat in silence. As the huge plywood and steel glider – 67 feet in length and with a wingspan of 88 feet – began its final descent to the target, all that could be heard was air swishing down the fuselage

and the co-pilot, John Ainsworth, counting down the seconds on his stopwatch, lit by a small hand-held lamp. Ainsworth then instructed pilot Jim Wallwork to turn 90 degrees to starboard. The second of these turns brought the glider on to a northerly heading. Directly ahead, clearly visible by moonlight, was the familiar outline of the Caen Canal Bridge that the pilots knew so well from the detailed model.

The five sappers and 23 officers and men seated behind the pilots were lost in their thoughts, each man contemplating what was to come and those he had left behind. Major John Howard had visions of his wife, Joy, and two children sleeping peacefully in their beds in Oxford. He could feel the small lump in his tunic's breast pocket where he had placed one of his son's first pairs of red leather shoes. Out of the open door he could see the river Orne and knew they were on course.

With the glider losing height rapidly, and rocking from side to side, Ainsworth yelled: "Hold tight!"

It was the signal for the men to adopt the brace position by linking arms and lifting their legs off the floor. Gripping their weapons tightly, the men tensed their bodies for impact. "I gritted my teeth," recalled Howard, "and tried to pray but all I could think was 'Please God, please God' as we came in to land with a terrific crash, a splintering noise and sparks flying past outside the doorway."

Skidding and bouncing twice on the uneven ground, the glider lost its wheels and landed on its metal skids at 80 miles per hour. Howard thought they were under fire, but in fact the flashes were just caused by the skids striking the stony ground. With a final roar, the glider came to a juddering halt with its nose through the bridge's barbed wire defences, just as Howard had requested.

It was 12.16am on Tuesday 6 June 1944, and the D-Day landings had begun.



Major John Howard (right), head of D Company, was obsessed with ensuring his men were the “best at everything” – from sport to endurance training

First wave The glider that bore Major Howard and his men to Pegasus bridge, pictured on 8 June 1944. The glider's crashlanding into the bridge's barbed wire defences signalled the start of D-Day

Howard's glider was the vanguard of Operation Tonga, the British airborne component of Operation Overlord, the long-awaited Allied plan to use 5,300 ships and 12,000 aircraft to land or drop 150,000 men and 1,500 tanks on or behind five beaches in Normandy. Tonga required the insertion of 8,500 glider-borne infantry and paratroopers from the 6th Airborne Division on the eastern flank of the D-Day beachhead. At the same time, 13,000 men of the US 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions would secure the western flank.

The 6th Airborne had four key objectives: to secure intact and hold two road bridges over the Caen canal and Orne river; to neutralise an enemy artillery battery at Merville near the coast; to secure a bridgehead between the rivers Orne and Dives; and to prevent enemy reinforcements (including panzer units) moving towards the British left flank from the east and south-east.

The first task – given to the 180 sappers and men of Howard's D Company – was arguably the most important. They would land in six Horsa gliders at around midnight and capture the two bridges. Their possession was vital, not only to defend the eastern flank of the D-Day beachhead from a German counterattack, but also to allow an Allied breakout once the landings were secure. On the outcome of this single mission might the

success or failure of the whole Normandy invasion depend.

Precious resources

Almost exactly four years earlier – in June 1940 – in the wake of defeat in Belgium and France, and the miracle of the Dunkirk evacuation, Winston Churchill had called for the raising of “parachute troops on a scale equal to 5,000” as one way of taking the fight to Nazi Germany's ‘Fortress Europe’. It took years to get anywhere near that number. This was largely because the RAF, fixated on strategic bombing, was unwilling to divert more than a few of its precious resources to the training and transporting of paratroopers and glider-borne troops who were mostly recruited from the British Army. But Churchill's unwavering fervour, and the single-minded determination of key pioneers like Louis Strange, John Rock, Eric Down, Richard ‘Windy’ Gale and Frederick ‘Boy’ Browning, meant that the size and scope of airborne operations became increasingly ambitious.

Handicapped during its early years by inter-service rivalry and a chronic lack of suitable aircraft and equipment, Britain's airborne force gradually expanded from a single battalion of 500 men to three 10,000-strong airborne divisions: the 1st,

6th and 44th Indian, each composed of parachutists and glider-borne troops.

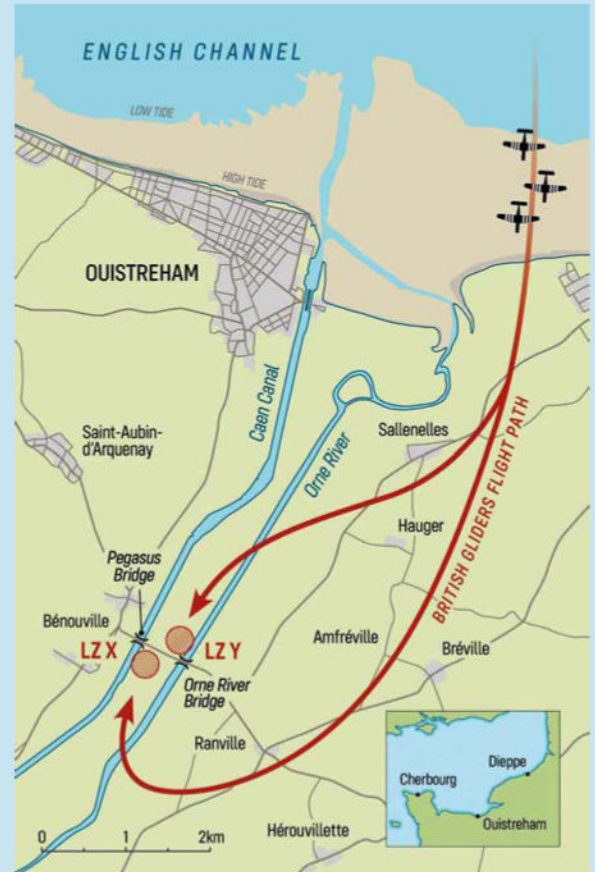
Wearing their distinctive maroon berets, steel helmets and Dennison smocks, the ‘Red Devils’ served with distinction in every major theatre of the conflict, including north Africa, Sicily, mainland Europe and the far east. They would play a starring role in some of the most iconic airborne operations in history: the Bruneval Raid of February 1942; the capture of the Primasole and Arnhem Bridges in July 1943 and September 1944 respectively; and Operation Varsity, the largest single-day airborne operation in history, near Wesel in Germany in March 1945 (see box p34–35).

Early missions were dogged by poorly trained pilots, the wrong type of aircraft, ill-chosen landing zones, overly optimistic objectives and inadequate planning and faulty intelligence. Despite these missteps, airborne troops proved their worth in an impressive number of roles, from small-scale raids and fighting like traditional infantry, to their favoured option: dropping behind enemy lines to secure vital ground and infrastructure in conjunction with a ground offensive. It was in this final capacity that Britain's airborne force was expected to make a vital contribution to Allied victory on D-Day.

The man tasked with capturing the two



Strike force Men of the 6th Airborne Division receive a briefing ahead of Operation Tonga. These troops were specialists in landing behind enemy lines and securing vital infrastructure



A map of the assault on Pegasus bridge. The operation helped stymie counterattacks and enabled an Allied breakout from the beaches

bridges on 6 June 1944 was 31-year-old Major John Howard, born in a tiny two-up, two-down house in Camden, north London, in December 1912, the eldest of nine children. He was “proud of having come up from the ranks to achieve his position”, noted one of his men, “having once been an Oxford City Police sergeant, and he took his responsibilities very seriously indeed”. This meant that his company “had to be the best at everything, be it sport, marches, field exercises or physical and endurance training”. And it was.

On 15 April 1944, shortly after taking part in a full-scale divisional exercise, Howard was told by his commanding officer: “Your company will be the spearhead for the invasion... I feel absolutely confident that you will be able to pull it off.”

Over the next month, Howard worked tirelessly to fine-tune his plan: studying intelligence reports, maps, aerial photographs and a detailed model of the two bridges, which was constantly updated. He decided to target each bridge with three gliders, each carrying a platoon of men. The first platoon would pierce the enemy defences, race across the bridge and take out any opposition on the far side. The second platoon would mop up the inner defences, while the third, if it arrived safely, would help whichever platoon was most in need. The sappers were to go

Major Howard opened his eyes to see “the air full of dust, the holes torn in the side of the glider”

straight for the chambers on the bridge holding the explosive (placed there in case the Germans wanted to demolish the structure), “cut wires, de-prime and remove it”.

Drilled to destruction

The last-minute training for the operation involved the ‘capture’ of two similar crossings in Devon. Howard worked his men until they ached, insisting that every platoon practised each of the jobs, “so that no matter who landed where and in what order, they would all automatically know what to do”.

So it proved on 6 June. Briefly knocked unconscious by the impact of the landing, Howard opened his eyes to see “the smashed doorway, the air full of dust, the holes torn in the side of the glider”. Up front the pilots were “groaning in the smashed cockpit”.

Wrenching off his safety harness and grabbing his Sten gun, Howard rolled head-first out of the broken doorway. Directly ahead, barely 50 feet away, stood the large water tower on the east side of the canal bridge (later dubbed ‘Pegasus’ Bridge after the division’s winged-horse shoulder flash). The pilots had clearly done a marvellous job. Turning to the platoon commander, Lieutenant Den Brotheridge, Howard said: “Get cracking with your first section.”

In his rich Brummie accent, Brotheridge

On the advance

British airborne troops pictured in Normandy on 6 June 1944. These soldiers would be called on to fight off repeated German counterattacks



shouted “Come on lads!” and started running towards the bridge with his platoon in close pursuit. They were spotted by a lone German sentry on the bridge who fired a white ‘Very’ light which made him the target of multiple Sten guns.

While one section peeled off to deal with a pillbox, Brotheridge led the charge across the bridge, “firing from the hip as he went”. Private Denis Edwards remembered: “As we neared the far side of the bridge, still shouting, firing our weapons and lobbing hand grenades, the Germans jumped to their feet and ran for their lives, scattering in all directions. Relief, exhilaration, incredulity – I experienced all these feelings upon realising that we had taken the bridge.”

There were two fatalities: Brotheridge, who had been shot in the throat and mortally wounded; and a lance corporal who was knocked unconscious and drowned when the third glider landed in a pond. Numerous other casualties left Howard, within a few minutes of landing, with only one officer left, and that was, recalled Howard, “Sandy Smith, who only had the use of one arm”.

Meanwhile, thanks to a navigational error, only two of three gliders had landed near the neighbouring road bridge over the river Orne, half a mile away. But there was little opposition and the reduced force was able to capture the bridge after destroying a machine gun post with a mortar round. When Howard



British troops cross Pegasus bridge on 9 June. Two Horsa gliders are visible in the background

For the next 12 hours, the men of 7 Para fought off a series of vicious German counterattacks

ion time to reach both bridges, though they were 90 minutes behind schedule and down to a quarter of their strength because many had been blown off course or dropped in the wrong place.

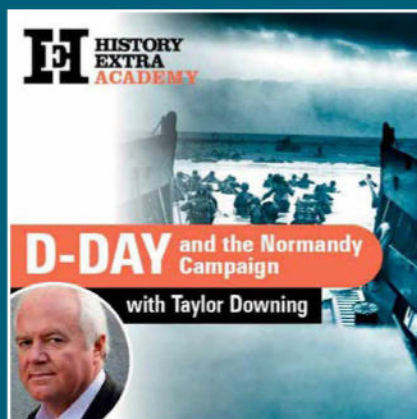
For the next 12 hours, the men of 7 Para – including a young Lieutenant Richard Todd, the future film star – fought off a series of vicious German counterattacks from the west. They, and the rest of the 3rd and 5th Parachute Brigades – also much reduced in fighting capacity – were fortunate that the 110 tanks and two *panzergrenadier* regiments of the veteran 21st Panzer Division, stationed nearby, were not given the order to fight back until 8am, by which time it was too late.

Elsewhere, the men of Major Terence Otway’s 9th Parachute Battalion – reduced by mishaps to just a quarter of its size – had stormed and put out of action the four guns of the Merville Battery near the coast. “It was,” read the divisional report, “a disappointment to the battalion to find that the guns were of 75mm [calibre] only, and these were destroyed by Gammon bombs. It does not detract however from a magnificent feat of arms, and a display of absolute determination to overcome all handicaps.”

Whole ground shaking

As the sun rose on the morning of 6 June, just a few miles from the captured bridges and battery, the greatest amphibious assault in history was gathering momentum. At 5.30am, the British battleships *Warspite* and *Ramillies* began the Allied naval bombardment of the Germans’ coastal defences. “It was as though you could feel the whole ground shaking towards the coast,” recalled John Howard.

BECOME A D-DAY EXPERT



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got the news, he told his radio operator to tap out the success signal, “Ham and Jam!”

The Red Devils had captured both bridges intact; now they had to hold on to them. The first counterattack was by German armoured vehicles of *Panzerjäger* Battalion 716, which approached the canal bridge from the west. The only anti-tank weapon possessed by Howard’s men was a hand-held PIAT – its 2½-pound projectile capable of penetrating 4 inches of armour – with an effective range of only 50 yards. Lying beside the road, Sergeant Charles ‘Wagga’ Thornton was “shaking like a leaf” as he lined up his PIAT’s sights on the lead vehicle. Knowing he would not have time to reload, he waited until the black shape was just 30 yards away before squeezing the trigger. The armoured half-track exploded “with a mighty bang”, followed by more “deafening cracks and thuds” as its load of ammunition ignited.

Fearing the defenders of the bridge were armed with formidable 6-pounder anti-tank guns, the Germans withdrew. This gave the relieving troops of the 7th Parachute Battal-

TAKING THE FIGHT TO FORTRESS EUROPE

Five more British airborne operations that shaped the course of the Second World War

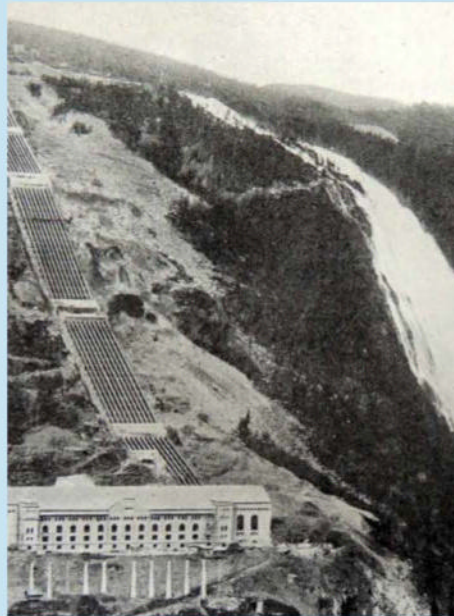
OPERATION COLOSSUS

10–12 February 1941

X Troop explodes into action

The first British airborne operation of the war, Colossus tasked 36 officers and men of X Troop, 11th Special Air Service (later 1st Parachute) Battalion with parachuting into southern Italy and blowing up the Tragino aqueduct that provided water for the whole province of Apulia. They succeeded, though all 36 were captured as they tried to escape (and one, an Italian, was shot as a traitor).

While the mission did not achieve its strategic objective of discouraging Italy from fighting a war on two fronts – in Albania and north Africa – it was a tactical and moral victory, and proved the worth of Britain's fledgling airborne force.



SOE agents blew up the Norsk Hydro plant three months after a similar raid had ended in disaster

OPERATION FRESHMAN

19/20 November 1942

Gliding into trouble

Operation Freshman was a bold, even foolhardy, attempt to land a glider-borne force of four pilots and 27 airborne sappers in southern Norway to destroy German stocks of 'heavy water', a vital component of nuclear research. Poor weather and faulty navigational aids dogged the assault on the Norsk Hydro plant, resulting in both gliders crashing miles from the target. Those not killed on impact were captured and executed by the Germans, the first victims of Hitler's infamous 'Commando Order'.

Three months later, six Norwegian SOE operatives blew up the plant after parachuting into the country, a feat immortalised by the British war film *Heroes of Telemark*, starring Kirk Douglas and Richard Harris.

TOP/PHOTO/GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

OPERATION BITING

27/28 February 1942

Frost's lighting strike

Led by Major John Frost (of Arnhem fame), 120 sappers and men of C Company, 2nd Parachute Battalion attempted one of the most daring raids of the war. Their mission was to parachute into northern France to capture part of the new Würzburg early-warning radar system from Bruneval on the coast, and bring it back to Britain.

Though some men landed in the wrong place, and opposition was fierce, Frost's troops dismantled the radar and took it and two prisoners to a nearby beach where they were picked up by the Royal Navy. "We thus became," wrote Winston Churchill, "the possessors of vital portions of a key piece of equipment in the German radar defences and gathered information which greatly helped our air offensive."

The radar system at Bruneval pictured before its capture by British paratroopers



OPERATION MARKET

17–26 September 1944

The bridge too far

This was the airborne component of Field Marshal Montgomery's hugely ambitious plan to shorten the war by seizing river and canal crossings as far as Arnhem on the lower Rhine, 64 miles behind enemy lines. The British 1st and US 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions were to provide a 'carpet' for the ground troops of the British XXX Corps to advance over (Operation Garden).

Despite a litany of mishaps – poor planning, intelligence ignored, faulty radios and flawed command decisions – and fierce resistance by SS panzer troops, John Frost and 700 men were able to hold the north end of the Arnhem road bridge for almost twice the 48 hours they had been asked to. But ultimately it was 'A Bridge Too Far' – the title of Cornelius Ryan's bestselling history – as the ground troops took too long to reach them and almost 8,000 of the original 10,700 men of the 1st Airborne Division and Polish Parachute Brigade were killed or taken prisoner.



Allied tank destroyers roll across a bridge during the ultimately doomed Operation Market Garden, 1944

OPERATION VARSITY

24 March 1945

The greatest wave

The combined force of 14,300 paratroopers and glider-borne infantry – from the British 6th and US 17th Airborne Divisions – made this the largest single-day airborne operation in history. They landed on the east bank of the Rhine near Wesel in north Germany to support an amphibious crossing by the British Second Army (Operation Plunder). Learning the lessons of

Arnhem, the troops were dropped in a single wave as close to their objectives as possible, and only after the ground troops were across the river. By the end of 24 March, they had linked up with the

ground forces. It was, wrote General Eisenhower, “the most successful airborne operation we carried out during the war”.

A US paratrooper prepares for Operation Varsity



Moment of truth Major General ‘Windy’ Gale with men of the 5th Parachute Brigade at RAF Harwell in the hours before Operation Tonga. The success of the operation was pivotal to the entire campaign

What Howard and his colleagues had achieved that morning was critical to the success of the D-Day landings. If Operation Tonga had failed, and the Germans had been able to retake the bridges, there might have been two immediate consequences: the isolation and destruction of the bulk of 6th Airborne Division east of the river Orne; and an armoured counterattack by the whole of the 21st Panzer Division against the eastern flank of the five D-Day landing beaches. Such an assault would have caused untold casualties and threatened the very success of the invasion itself.

But Tonga did not fail. Despite the inaccuracy of the drops (thanks to damaged Eureka radar sets, not enough Pathfinder teams, poorly trained aircraft crews and adverse weather), the 6th Airborne Division achieved all four main tasks set for it on D-Day. Over the next 10 weeks, the division was able to consolidate the bridgehead east of the Orne and beat off repeated enemy attacks.

On 18 August 1944, the division crossed the Dives Canal – as part of the Allied breakout from the Normandy bridgehead

– and by the 27th had captured Pont Audemer on the river Risle, just 10 miles from the Seine. It had, recalled Terence Otway, advanced 45 miles in nine days, “largely on foot against heavy enemy opposition and through difficult country”.

High praise indeed

Lieutenant General Harry Crerar, commanding the First Canadian Army, congratulated Major General ‘Windy’ Gale on the “immense contribution” his division had made during the recent fighting, particularly the impressive “determination and speed with which his troops have pressed on in spite of all enemy efforts to the contrary”. By the time it re-embarked for England in early September, to prepare for its next big airborne operation, the division had lost 4,457 men: 821 killed, 2,709 wounded and 927 missing.

But it is for its valiant efforts on D-Day, and not the Normandy campaign as a whole, that the previously un-blooded 6th Airborne will forever be remembered. “It is doubtful,” noted a British newspaper report of 22 June, “whether there has ever been a body of troops who have been brought to a higher pitch of physical fitness, self-reliance and fighting skill. The gallant deeds of that magnificent division made history... As General Montgomery said yesterday: ‘The men of that division who died did not die in vain.’” **E**

By the time it returned to England in September 1944, the 6th Airborne Division had lost 4,457 men

Saul David is a historian and broadcaster. His latest book, *Sky Warriors: British Airborne Forces in the Second World War*, was published in April

» We'll be interviewing Max Hastings about **Operation Biting** in July's issue

Q&A

A selection of historical **conundrums** answered by experts



When did Britain acquire Gibraltar?

►►► Britain officially acquired Gibraltar through article 10 of the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, which passed sovereignty of the territory from Spain to Britain “for ever”. The treaty ended British involvement in the War of Spanish Succession, a pan-European conflict fought to settle the question of whether a Bourbon or Habsburg claimant would rise to the Spanish throne after the death of Carlos II in 1700.

There is a common myth that ‘the Rock’ (as it soon became popularly known in Britain) had in fact been captured by the British in 1704. Notwithstanding the fact that Britain did not exist as a nation-state until the Act of Union in 1707, the coalition force that assaulted Gibraltar on 4 August 1704 was made up of around 2,000 English, Dutch, Spanish and Catalan servicemen. The commanding officer was the German prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt, and the territory was officially surrendered to Archduke Charles of Austria, the Habsburg claimant to the Spanish throne.

Gibraltar’s first three governors after the capture were appointed by Charles and governed in his name. It was therefore in the peace, and not the war, that Gibraltar became a British territory.

From the moment of handing it to Britain, successive Spanish governments have sought to recover El Peñón. In the 18th century, this was through military means – an idea that General Franco also seriously considered during the Second World War. In more recent decades, it has been through diplomatic and economic pressure.

The ambiguities of Utrecht certainly offer scope for alleging British ‘breaches’ of the treaty – not least in relation to land encroachment, territorial waters and airspace – but the unambiguous nature of the term ‘for ever’ is perhaps the most important feature of the treaty for the Gibraltarians who have called the Rock home for centuries.

.....
Gareth Stockey, former lecturer, translator and co-author of *Gibraltar: A Modern History* (University of Wales Press, 2012)



An image depicting the Rock of Gibraltar in 1704, when it was assaulted by a coalition of troops, leading the Spanish to relinquish control and, later, the territory to become British

When did citrus fruits first arrive in Europe?

►►► Despite their association with regions like Italy and Spain, citruses aren’t native to Europe. The first to appear was *Citrus medica* (the citron), recorded by Theophrastus in the third century BC and apocryphally introduced from Asia by Alexander the Great. Lemons and bitter oranges have been known in Europe since the first century AD, and were sought-after luxury items, although climatic conditions hindered cultivation. Realising delicate trees needed protection against the elements, growers experimented with temporary shelters.

In mid-16th- (possibly 15th) century Italy, the orangery was invented – a glasshouse providing light, air and warmth in which citrus could thrive. Thanks to this innovation, citrus-growing boomed among the upper classes, becoming a fashionable status symbol. Sweet oranges were introduced around the early 16th century by Portuguese traders.

Though not initially as popular as their bitter counterparts, by the 17th century a taste for them burgeoned, laying the foundation for today’s lucrative citrus industry.

.....
Jessica Hudson, rare books librarian for the Royal Horticultural Society

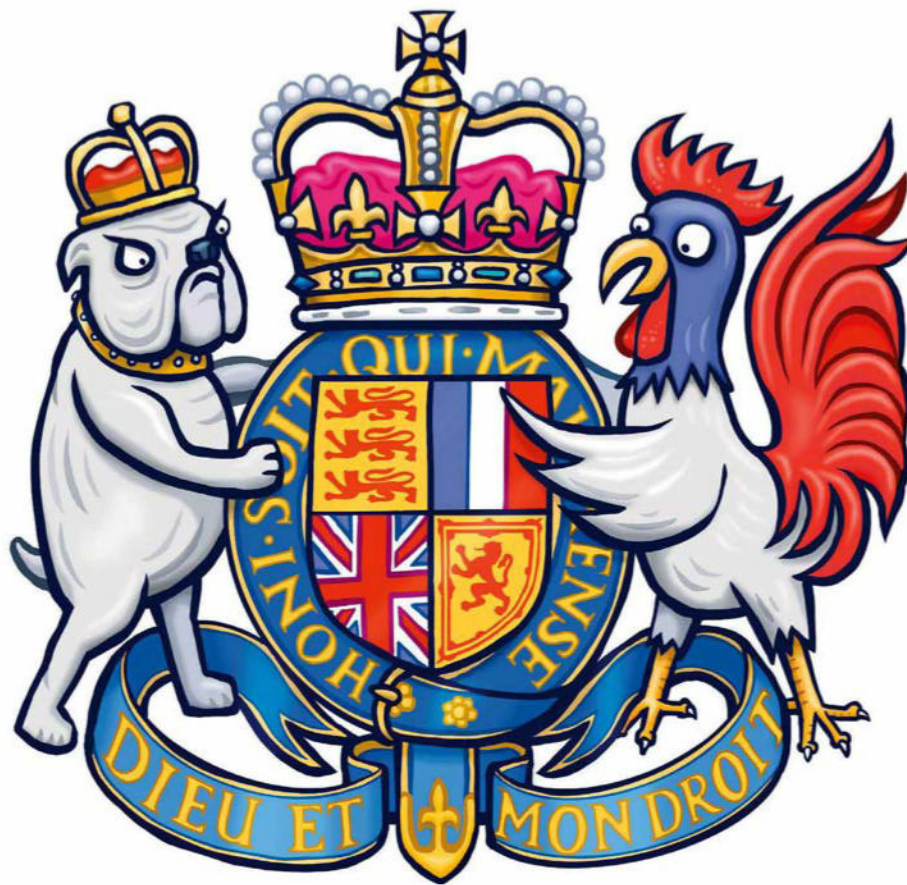


ILLUSTRATION BY GLEN McBETH

Why does the British monarchy use French mottoes?

►►► Most British people will recognise the United Kingdom's coat of arms, adorning everything from UK passports to public buildings. But the eagle-eyed – well, at least those living outside of Scotland, where a different version is used – may well have been baffled by some of its finer details.

The symbol depicts a lion rampant (standing upright) and unicorn flanking a colourful escutcheon (shield) emblazoned with the heraldry of the British and Irish nations, as well as two mottoes. Yet these words are not English, or even Latin, but French.

To understand why, we head back to 1066, when William, Duke of Normandy prevailed over the Anglo-Saxons at the battle of Hastings. He became England's anointed monarch on Christmas Day of that year, before proceeding to conquer the rest of the realm.

Unsurprisingly, England's new elite communicated in their native Norman French and their connection to territory across the Channel endured. In 1198, at the battle of Gisors, King Richard I (the Lionheart) of England used "*Dieu et mon droit*" ("God and my right") as a battle cry to assert his personal, divine-sanctioned claim to France. Centuries later, Henry V formally

adopted the motto, again staking claim to the French throne.

Meanwhile, the words "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*" ("shame on him who thinks this evil"), emblazoned on the blue garter that encircles the escutcheon, is the motto of England's oldest order of chivalry: the Order of the Garter.

Founded by Edward III in the mid-14th century, the order's origins are disputed. One apocryphal story holds that during a ball to celebrate England's victory at the battle of Crécy, the king's daughter-in-law, the Countess of Salisbury, misplaced her garter while dancing, prompting revellers to sneer.

The king retrieved the garter and fastened it around his own leg before chiding her tormentors with the words that would become the order's maxim. But it was more likely intended as a challenge to those who doubted Edward's birth right to the French throne.

Although the British crown formally relinquished its claim to France with the signing of the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, the monarchy has to this day persisted with its usage of the two French mottoes adopted in the medieval era.

.....
Danny Bird, staff writer,
BBC History Magazine

DID YOU KNOW...?

Thunderous success

The phrase 'steal my thunder', meaning to appropriate someone else's idea, originates in 18th-century theatre. A 1709 tragedy, *Appius and Virginia*, by the dramatist John Dennis failed at the box office but his creation of a machine to imitate thunder was a great success.

A later production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* used his invention.

Dennis was sitting in the audience. He stood up and furiously shouted: "Damn them!... they will not let my play run, but they steal my thunder."



Olympic one-hit wonder

The last event in the first modern Olympic Games, in Athens in 1896, was a cycling race that lasted 12 hours, beginning at 5am and ending at 5pm. Seven competitors set out to ride round and round the track at the Neo Phaliron Velodrome but only two lasted the course. The gold medal was won by the Austrian cyclist Adolf Schmal; the silver by Great Britain's Frederick Keeping. The 12-hour race was never included in the Olympics again.

A space for waste

The cast-iron public urinals, once a familiar sight in Paris, were named after a Roman emperor. Introduced in the 1840s by the Comte de Rambuteau, Prefect of the Department of the Seine, they became known at first as *colonnes Rambuteau* (Rambuteau columns). Perhaps irritated by the association of his name with a pissoir, Rambuteau suggested the alternative term *Vespasienne* after the emperor Vespasian who had imposed a tax on urine collected from public toilets for use in the tanning industry.

.....
Nick Rennison, writer and journalist specialising in history

A cast-iron urinal with six stalls on the streets of Paris, c1865



WHY DO WE SAY...

...“open a can of worms”?

»»» When trying to solve a problem and finding ourselves entangled in ever more difficult tasks, we sometimes say that we have opened a can of worms. The image and the message are transparent, which is not a common case in idioms. Compare it to such phrases as to ‘sow one’s wild oats’ or to ‘pay through the nose’. In my childhood, I used to fish, that is, spend hours digging up live bait (worms!) and sitting with a fishing-rod. Though I was careful not to let the worms crawl out of the can, I had no notion of today’s overused (and hence to be avoided) phrase. Obviously, only someone with an angler’s experience could coin it.

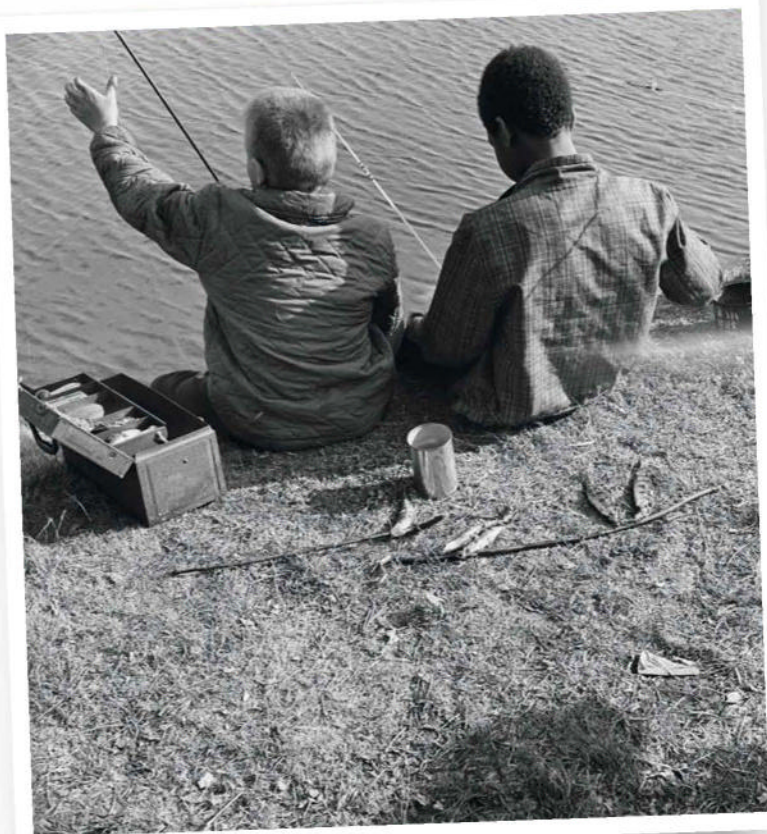
The phrase seems to have cropped up in the United States in the middle of the past century and was probably a creation of some ingenious journalist. This could be the end of the story,

but let us also note how often the noun ‘can’ forms the backbone of our idioms.

Children enjoy finding an empty can and kicking it aimlessly here and there. Hence another relatively recent American coinage: to ‘kick the can down the road’, which means ‘to put off an important decision, to procrastinate’. And those who take the blame for somebody else’s fault are known to ‘carry the can’. This time, the source is British slang: one carries a heavy container for the benefit of the entire company. Aren’t idioms a can of worms?



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Anatoly Liberman,
professor and author of
*An Analytic Dictionary
of English Etymology*
(University of Minnesota-
ta Press, 2008)



Two boys fishing in the 1960s, with their tackle box and bait.
The angler’s ‘can of worms’ became a popular general idiom



The Guaita is one of the three towers of San Marino – all perched on Monte Titano – which appear on the country’s flag

What is the world’s oldest extant state?

»»» The tiny landlocked republic of San Marino has a good claim to this title. Located in the hills inland from the former Roman colony of Ariminum (Rimini), it traces its origins to the fourth century, when, by tradition, the future St Marinus (source of its name) settled there to spread the word of God.

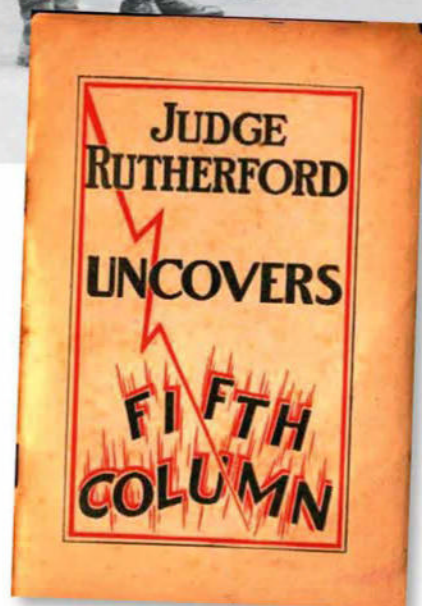
Its history in this early period is rather hazy. Perhaps by the 11th century, but certainly by the 13th, it was one of many self-governing communes on the Italian peninsula. Unlike most of the Italian states, however, it kept that status through centuries of turbulence. Cesare Borgia seized it, but only for six months.

While the republics of Venice and Lucca fell to French forces in the late 18th century, Napoleon respected San Marino’s independence. Giuseppe Garibaldi took refuge there while leading the struggle for Italian unification, and San Marino secured recognition from the government of the new kingdom of Italy in 1862.

.....
Catherine Fletcher, professor of history
at Manchester Metropolitan University



Seen here with troops in 1936, General Emilio Mola instilled fear of the enemy within during the Spanish Civil War



In this 1940 book, Judge Rutherford set out his belief that Catholics were the 'fifth column', seeking to take control of the world

What is the origin of 'fifth column'?

»» The term 'fifth column' originated in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), which began following a botched military uprising against the Spanish Republic. Coined by the insurgent General Emilio Mola, he hinted that a clandestine network of collaborators embedded within Republican-held Madrid were ready to undermine the government from within.

At the time, four columns of rebel military units were advancing towards the Spanish capital, Madrid. Mola's conjuring of a 'Trojan Horse' within the city – something that was ready to pounce at the opportune moment – was designed to strike fear and suspicion among Republicans.

This metaphorical 'enemy within' soon gained traction as a means of psychological warfare. Its resonance widened during the Second World War, as both sides of the conflict wielded propaganda about fifth columnists lurking within their midst.

Over time, 'fifth column' has come to denote any group or individuals perceived as disloyal or traitorous, who are covertly working against the interests of their own society or nation. Its enduring usage attests to the power of metaphor to manipulate popular opinion and rally obedience through paranoia.

.....
Danny Bird, staff writer, *BBC History Magazine*

What is the Phrygian cap?

»» Also known as the 'liberty cap', this red, brimless conical-shaped bonnet is one of the most universally recognised symbols of freedom. Its precise origins are murky, but it owes its name to Phrygia, an ancient region of Anatolia (part of modern Turkey). Ancient Greek sources portrayed the inhabitants of this area as sporting the unusual headgear.

Phrygia was linked to slavery in the classical world and the cap denoted a Phrygian who had regained their freedom. However, some scholars contend that it has been conflated with the similar Roman *pileus*, which was ceremoniously placed upon the head of a freed slave.

During the Atlantic revolutions of the late 18th century, the cap's association with liberation saw it become one of the era's most ubiquitous emblems. It was incorporated into the seal of the US Senate and worn by the radical working-class *sans-culottes* of Paris, searing it into the visual memory of the French Revolution.

Eugène Delacroix's famous 1830 painting *Liberty Leading the People*, marking the July Revolution in Paris, depicts a personification of liberty guiding a throng of revolutionaries while wearing the Phrygian cap. **H**

.....
Danny Bird, staff writer, *BBC History Magazine*



The seal of the United States Senate, containing an image of the 'liberty' or Phrygian cap



Poster showing volunteers helping the sick and wounded during the Second World War



Volunteer nurses with D-Day veterans, 1945



Red Cross volunteers assisting D-Day casualties

A remarkable legacy

BRITISH RED CROSS MUSEUM
CURATOR MEHZEBIN ADAM-
SUTER COMMEMORATES D-DAY
AND EXPLAINS HOW LEAVING
THE CHARITY A GIFT IN YOUR
WILL CAN HELP BRING HOPE
TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

This June marks the 80th anniversary of D-Day, when more than 150,000 troops from the British, Canadian and American armies – among soldiers from many other countries – landed on the beaches of Normandy. The largest seaborne invasion in history, it led to the liberation of France and helped bring an end to the Second World War.

Despite the success of D-Day, there were thousands of casualties in need of relief. Working closely with the American and Canadian Red Cross societies, the British Red Cross was quick to respond. Just a month after the landings, volunteers,

including clerks, storekeepers, drivers, and welfare officers, arrived in Normandy to provide relief to the wounded. They brought transport vehicles and relief equipment, such as surgical items and hospital garments.

The volunteers worked under extremely challenging conditions, with the first teams arriving in Normandy during a rainstorm. Nevertheless, they worked tirelessly, not only providing lifesaving first aid and medical care, but also boosting the morale of the sick and wounded, providing newspapers, books, playing cards and even treats, like jam and chocolates.

Sadly, the war in Europe lasted another 11 months and, during that time, the British Red Cross continued to support the sick and wounded in the UK and overseas. While some services closed when the war ended, auxiliary hospitals and convalescent homes remained for some years. The organisation also formed new services for the repatriation and welfare of the servicemen who were finally returning home.

LEAVE THE GIFT OF HOPE

The work carried out by the British Red Cross is as essential today as it was during the Second World War. To help the charity continue supporting those in need, many supporters choose to include a gift in their will.

Through the free will writing service with the National Free Wills Network, you can write or update your will with the help of a trusted local solicitor of your choice. Although there's no obligation to leave a gift, by choosing to do so, your gift would be a lifeline to people in need when crisis strikes in the UK and around the world.

All images ©British Red Cross Museum and Archives

How the Vikings viewed the world



An amulet depicting Thor's hammer, Mjollnir, which he wielded with devastating effect against his foes in Norse mythology

Old Norse poetry isn't just a rip-roaring account of the exploits of gods and giants. It's also an indispensable portal into how the Vikings understood the universe.

Alicia Maddalena and **Matthew Townend** give us a whistle-stop tour of a glittering art form

Star quality

Old Norse poetry celebrated the exploits of figures such as the warrior Hogni, shown here having his heart cut out in a 12th-century carving in a Norwegian church



King, you made a great attack on the family of princes. Gracious leader, you reddened broad Kantaraborg in the morning.” With these words, an early 11th-century poet, Óttarr the Black, praises one of the martial feats of his patron, King Óláfr Haraldsson of Norway. Kantaraborg is the Old Norse form of the name of Canterbury; the event that is being commemorated here is the capture of the city by a Viking army in 1011. Its sequel the following year was the shocking martyrdom of Archbishop Ælfheah.

For the English writers of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the capture of Canterbury was a grievous event: the 1011 entry laments that “there misery could be seen in the place where joy was often seen previously”. But that is not at all how the taking of Canterbury is viewed in Óttarr’s verse. Here, the assault offers grounds for celebration, an instance of the king’s military prowess.

Old Norse poetry such as Óttarr’s, in other words, gives us access to a perspective on the Viking Age from the Vikings themselves. Such poetry is full of journeys and battles, dominated by charismatic war-leaders who wield weapons, conquer lands, and share out treasure to their followers. The stereotype of the Vikings as great warriors derives largely from this self-image that was cultivated by their poets.

But that is by no means the only subject matter that we find in this body of verse. In the Viking Age, poetry was also used to tell mythological stories about the gods and

their cosmos, celebrate special occasions, woo prospective lovers, insult rivals, and commemorate everything from a generous gift to a well-decorated interior.

Composed in the Old Norse language, Viking poetry is the great under-used resource for exploring and understanding the early medieval Scandinavian world. Only in such poetry, and in the less eloquent corpus of runic inscriptions, can we hear the Vikings speak for themselves. Given that their actions and ideas have predominantly been mediated to us through texts produced by their victims – in places such as England and France – its value cannot be overestimated.

And the value of the verse is by no means purely historical. This is powerful and even dizzying poetry, marked by verbal ingenuity, imaginative invention and sheer, varied humanity.

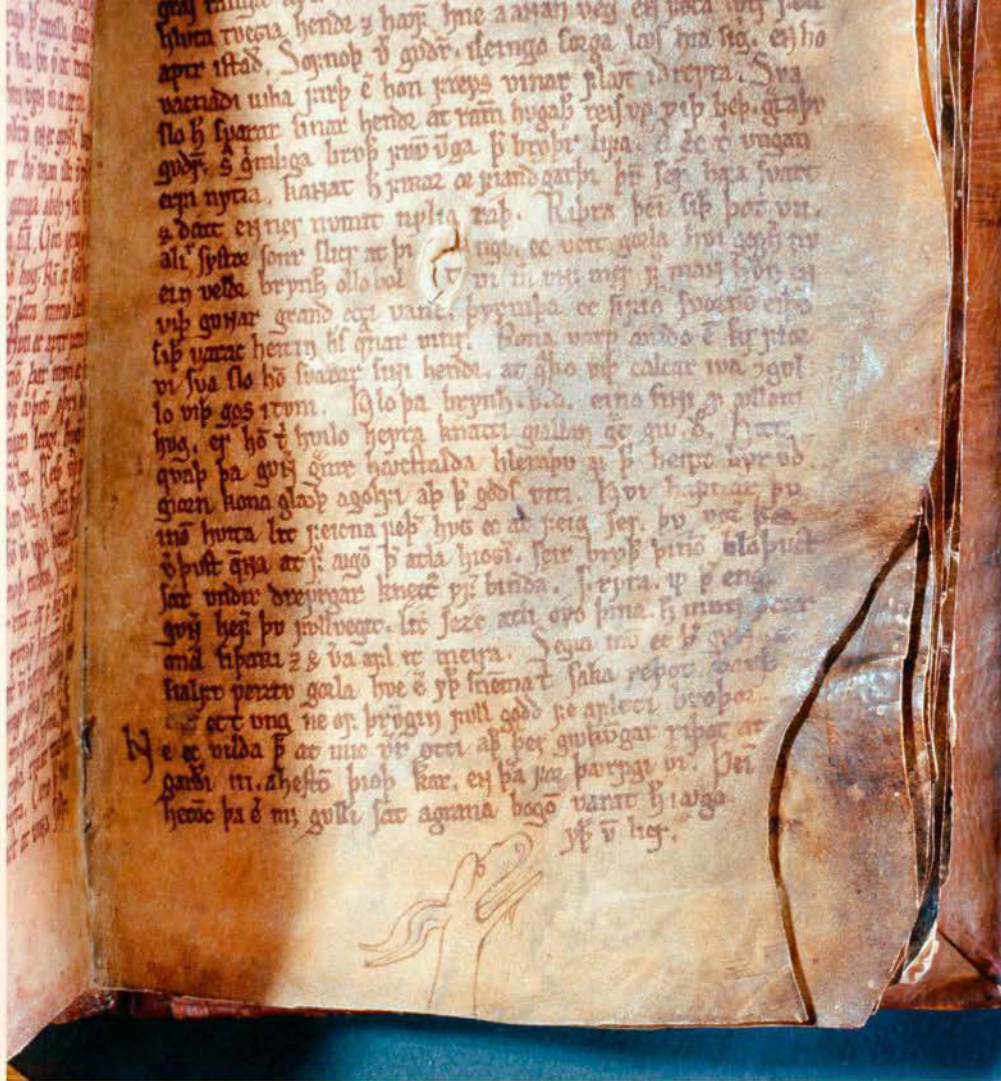
Old Norse poetry was oral: it was composed without writing, recited publicly at social gatherings, received through the ear, and transmitted through memorisation. It was only decades or even centuries later that it was committed to writing, especially in Iceland, in the later medieval age of literacy.

Oral poetry is different from literate poetry in multiple ways. To compose oral poetry, you have to learn linguistic and metrical systems, and internalise a repertoire of potential words and phrases and formulae. The oral poet also has to command the attention of a public audience, not all of whom may be connoisseurs of such an art form. And you have to appeal to the ear, with arresting sound patterns and memorable locutions.

Heroes and dragon-slayers

Viking poetry has customarily been divided into two main types, called ‘eddic’ and ‘skaldic’. These terms are modern rather than medieval ones, but they act as helpful

The poetry is marked by verbal ingenuity, imaginative invention and sheer, varied humanity



Creative writing A page from the *Codex Regius* (left), a medieval manuscript containing most of the 'eddic' poetry available to us today

BELOW: The title page of the *Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturluson, a treatise on Old Norse poetry and poetics, written in 13th-century Iceland



labels for a distinction that seems to have been recognised by the Scandinavians themselves. Eddic poetry was anonymous, easy to understand, mythological or legendary in content, and composed in a metre very similar to that used in other Germanic poetries (such as the Old English *Beowulf*).

Most of the eddic poetry that we have is preserved in the *Codex Regius* manuscript, so named because it was gifted to the King of Denmark, having been discovered in Iceland by Brynjólfur Sveinsson, bishop of Skálholt, in the 17th century. This collection of poetry has come to be known as the *Poetic Edda*, and contains 29 poems. These include tales about the beginning and the end of the Norse cosmos, poems that tell stories of the gods Odin and Thor, and ones dedicated to heroes such as Sigurd, who killed the dragon Fafnir and claimed his cursed gold for his own.

Skaldic poetry tended to be composed for specific events or patrons, and it is often attributable to named poets whose itinerant careers can be reconstructed. We know that Óttarr the Black composed not only for Óláfr Haraldsson of Norway, but also for a Norwegian magnate called Dala-Guðbrandr, for the Danish monarchs Swein Forkbeard and Cnut the Great, and two Swedish kings as well. We also know something of Óttarr's family background: he was an Icelander, and probably the nephew of Sigvatr Þórðarson, the pre-eminent poet of the early 11th century.

Skaldic poetry was, then, an international medium.

It can also be connected to historical facts – named poets, datable poems and known locations – in a way that is rare for early medieval poetry.

Skaldic poetry was composed in a dense, intensive style, and poets both drew on communal traditions and endeavoured to outshine each other with ingenious innovations. Óttarr's poem for Óláfr Haraldsson is called *Höfuðlausn* or *Head-Ransom*

(later traditions claim that the poet had offended the king, and had to save his skin, or ransom his head, by composing a praise-poem). It begins with both a call for hearing and an assurance of the poet's own excellence: "Listen, noble king with your retinue, to the memory of the dark one (ie Óttarr), because I know how to compose."

As the example of Óttarr suggests, skaldic poets were not noted for their modesty. A famous 10th-century skald, Egill Skallagrímsson, came to the court of King Eric Bloodaxe in York and declared that he "carried poetry to the fields of England", as if the country had been hitherto lacking in such a prestige item.

Bravura performances

The first two lines quoted at the start of this article read in the original Old Norse: *Atgöngu vannt, yngvi, / ætt siklinga mikla*. Although skaldic poetry alliterates like other early verse (here, *At-*, *yng-* and *ætt* alliterate with



Butt of a joke

Norse mythology is full of sexual indiscretions. The god Tyr (shown in an 18th-century manuscript) is cuckolded by his fellow deity Loki, and then taunted for not exacting revenge

one another as they all start with vowels), it also shows a number of other demanding features not found in poetry such as *Beowulf*. These include a precise counting of syllables (six to each line) and a bravura pattern of internal rhyme.

There is a specialist vocabulary to draw on – here *yngrvi* is a poetic term for ‘king’ or ‘ruler’ – and a system of metaphors called ‘kennings’, whereby a ship can be the ‘reindeer of the ocean’, or a sword can be the ‘lightning of battle’.

Elsewhere in his *Head-Ransom*, Óttarr praises the king as the “feeder of the ospreys of the wound-sea”: the wound-sea is blood, the ospreys of blood are carrion birds, and the feeder of the carrion birds is therefore the king as warrior, generously despatching a pile of enemies as the sign of a good day’s work.

Gods and giants

Norse gods don’t fight battles as often as kings such as Óláfr Haraldsson. Yet they, too, have their problems and in Viking poems are constantly at odds with their enemies, the giants. The giants (or *jötnar* in Old Norse) of

Norse mythology are not fairy-tale creatures – they are instead depicted as having social structures similar to that of the gods themselves, and can communicate eloquently. It is not uncommon for a god (particularly Odin) to find himself in a wisdom contest with a giant, as in the poem *Vaþrúðnismál* or *Vaþrúðnir’s Sayings*. Here, Odin and the giant Vaþrúðnir set their wits against each other and ask and answer questions about the Norse mythical world, its origins and cosmology. For example, Odin asks Vaþrúðnir about the beginnings of the world, inquiring: “Whence came the Earth / or the sky above?” to which Vaþrúðnir answers that: “Of the flesh of Ymir / was the Earth shaped, / and cliffs of his bones, / the sky of the skull / of the hoar-frost-cold giant, / the sea of his sweat.”

The violent destruction of the primordial giant Ymir’s body to create the Earth is attested in a number of other Old Norse sources, including the eddic poem *Völuspá* (*The Seeress’s Prophecy*), which is the first poem in the *Poetic Edda*. The wisdom contest format allows us to observe not only the authority of Odin – he always wins – but also to learn about the Viking cosmos and world-view as the contestants ask and answer their questions.

Viking poetry is often competitive, and insults can loom large, as

part of the honour and shame culture of the early medieval world. The eddic poem *Lokasenna* or *Loki’s Quarrel* is full of insults of sexual indiscretion. Among the cutting accusations that Loki hurls at the other gods is the suggestion that the wife of the martial Tyr has borne Loki’s child, and he says to the war-god that “not an ell nor a penny / have you ever had for this / injustice, wretched one”. So not only has Tyr been cuckolded by Loki, but he also hasn’t received any compensation for the offence. Tyr has not done what would normally have been considered the manly thing in this culture and taken vengeance on Loki, thus rendering this insult doubly shameful.

Competition also features in verses by a female poet called Steinunn Refsdóttir. Composing in late 10th-century Iceland, in the last years of paganism there, Steinunn used her verse to brag that a missionary’s ship had been destroyed by the power of Thor. The god, she said, broke “the bison of the place of the gull” (ie ship), after Christ “did not protect” it. Here poetry gives us an insight into religious rivalries in the age of conversion. In a head-to-head comparison between the vigorous Thor and the ineffective Christ, Steinunn declares a clear win for the former.

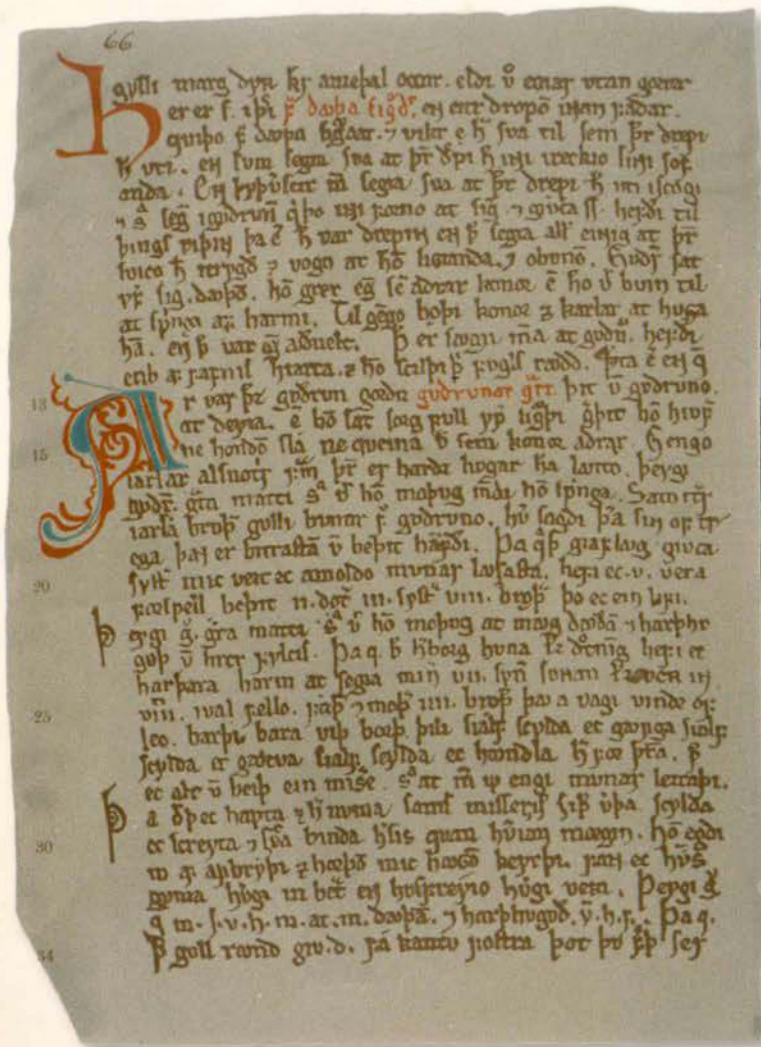
A different sort of rivalry can be found in verses attributed to two other Icelandic poets who were competing for the attention of the same woman, and used poetry as the medium through which to pursue their long-running feud. One of them, Björn Arngerisson, insulted his opponent by accusing him of being a *rusilkvæðr* (‘rubbish poet’) whose mother became pregnant through swallowing a *hrognkelsi* or lumpfish. In response, the rival poet, Þórðr Kolbeinsson, responded that Björn was “removed from truth and wisdom” and could produce only *hvítmál* (‘white or cowardly speech’).



Spreading the word

Norse runic inscriptions on the side of a c1030 gravestone found in London. One Norse poet bragged that he was responsible for introducing poetry to “the fields of England”

One poem from the age of religious conversion sees the vigorous Thor triumphing over an ineffective Christ



Catalogue of calamities

A page from *Gudrun's Lay* (left), which tells the story of "the grand tragic heroine of eddic poetry"

ABOVE: The dramatic landscape of Iceland. It was here that much Norse poetry was committed to writing in the medieval age of literacy

So Viking poetry could be low and lampooning as well as lofty and panegyric. And as these verses suggest, such poetry also enables us to access Viking humour. The poet Sigvatr, Öttarr's uncle, composed a set of *Austrfararvísur* (*Verses on a Journey to the East*), a comic travelogue about all the misfortunes that befell him on a diplomatic mission to Sweden. These included blisters on his feet, leaking boats and excessively cumbersome luggage.

Heartbroken and furious

Viking poetry could also transport its audience into the realms of tragedy. Norse poets understood love and loss just as keenly as we do and expressed those feelings in poignant verse. Among the tragic figures of the Norse legendary corpus is Brynhild. Stripped of her role as a Valkyrie when she falls in love with a man on the battlefield, Brynhild is later tricked and manipulated into marrying a man she doesn't love. Heartbroken and furious, she orchestrates the murder of the one who wronged her and sets herself alight on a pyre. As she recounts the wrongs done to her and predicts devastation to come, the dying Brynhild addresses her husband, saying: "I call many things to mind, how things went against me / when you dealt me the wounds of betrayal; / deprived of desire I was while I lived."

Brynhild was certainly no stranger to pain, but her

suffering is matched by that endured by Gudrun, the wife of the dragon-slaying Sigurd. Gudrun is the grand tragic heroine of eddic poetry, and in her last moments she recounts the many losses she has endured. These include waking up in the blood of her husband, who has been killed in bed beside her, and the death of her daughter Svanhild, who was falsely accused of infidelity and murdered by her husband. Gudrun describes her daughter as being *sem væri sæmleitr / sólar geisli* ("as fine to look at as a ray of sun"), and laments that "it was the hardest of my harms, / when the shining-white hair of Svanhild / they trod into the mud under the hooves of the horses". The stark contrast between the shining gold of her daughter's hair and the dull brown of the mud makes this mother's lament all the more unbearable.

Although its content may often have been bloody and brutal, Viking poetry was a complex and ornate art form, the verbal equivalent of exquisite medieval jewellery or sculpture. And in such poetry, we encounter the Vikings in their own words. It is a remarkable body of verse. Although there is certainly poetry that portrays Vikings as violent and war-hardened, there are also many examples of Old Norse poetry that convey emotion, humanity and even vulnerability. **H**

Alicia Maddalena and Matthew Townend are members of the Department of English and Related Literature, and the Centre for Medieval Studies, at the University of York

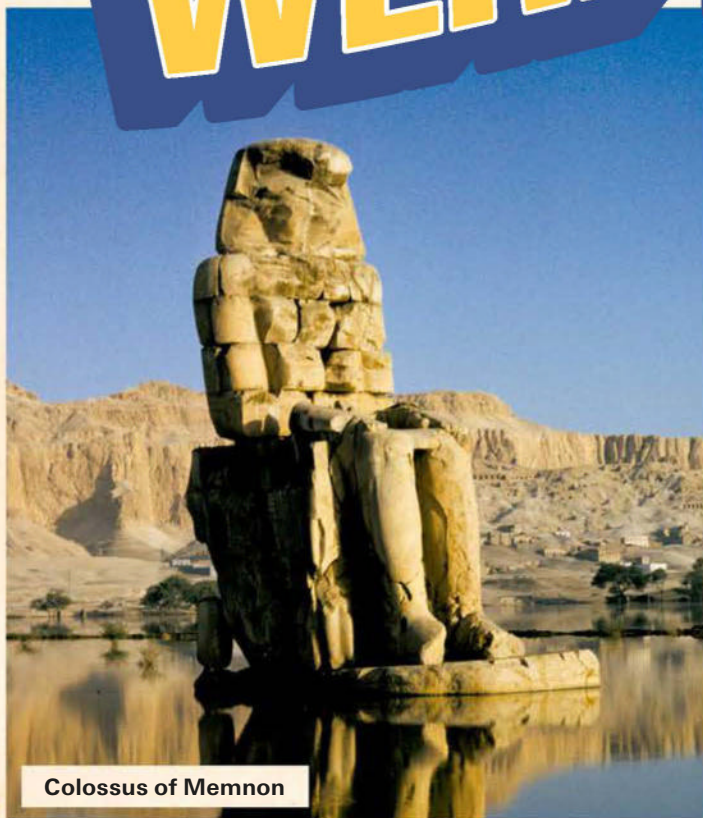


The authors of this piece will explore Viking Age poetry at **York Festival of Ideas** on Monday 10 June. yorkfestivalofideas.com

Cruising the Nile



**WISH YOU
WERE HERE!**



Colossus of Memnon



Pharaoh Amenhotep III

They carved their names into statues of pharaohs and took cruises down the Nile.

Mary Beard describes what happened when a party of elite Roman holidaymakers – led by the emperor Hadrian – descended on ancient Egypt's tourist hotspots in AD 130



Roman emperors and aristocrats were great tourists. They were as keen as we are on visiting the famous sights of the Mediterranean world, and they brought home souvenirs by the bucket-load. The best guide we have to the appearance of the lost statue of the goddess Athena inside the Parthenon at Athens, an extraordinary creation in gold and ivory, comes in the stone copies made for travellers and tourists. These range from pricey, high-quality replicas to the ancient equivalent of fridge magnets.

The most sought-after destination was Egypt, and the most alluring method of transport there was, as now, a Nile cruise. Julius Caesar holidayed on the river with Cleopatra. Half a century or so later, in AD 19, we know that Prince Germanicus, nephew of the emperor Tiberius, visited the country and took a boat up the Nile south from Alexandria.

No tourist, however, visited Egypt in greater style – or, I suspect, with a larger retinue of support staff, than the emperor Hadrian in AD 130. And no imperial party left quite such a lasting mark of their visit. In fact, you can still see the poems commemorating this trip, written by one of the emperor's aristocratic fellow-travellers – a woman by the name of Julia Balbilla (more on her later). They are carved into the leg of an ancient Egyptian statue, just outside modern Luxor (ancient Thebes).

It might seem like a rather upmarket version of 'Balbilla (and Hadrian) was here'. But these poems not only document a tourist experience; they shine a light onto one of those hidden women of the Roman world. Balbilla was not an 'ordinary' woman, but one of wealth, glamorous connections, and

talent. All the same, she usually slips below the radar of modern historians.

Hadrian's Egyptian cruise was only one part of a much longer journey for the emperor and his entourage. He was the most travelled of all the Roman rulers – and sightseeing, in our sense of the word, was no doubt only one side of the story. He was, after all, also inspecting 'his' empire and visiting the far-flung troops. By the time they reached Egypt, the imperial party had already been on the road (or at sea) for two years, taking in Sicily, north Africa, Greece and Gaza – in what was more a mammoth royal 'progress', or a court on the move, than a quick vacation.

Notorious and tragic

There must have been hundreds, if not thousands, of troops, bodyguards and administrators accompanying the Egyptian excursion, travelling on any number of boats, or following on land. (Some surviving ancient papyri record local worries about how on earth they were going to cater for this influx of officials and hangers-on, all needing billeting and feeding.)

But at the centre of this vast entourage were members of Hadrian's intimate circle. His wife, Sabina, was one of them. Julia Balbilla was another, a celebrity of the Roman international 'jet set'. The most notorious – and tragic – of them was the emperor's young boyfriend, Antinoos. In Roman terms, a married man also having a relationship with a young man was not so unusual. But there was something a bit edgier here. Antinoos drowned in mysterious circumstances in the Nile in early October 130. The question of 'Did he fall or was

The emperor Hadrian and his wife, Sabina (portrayed here as Mars and Venus in a second-century AD statue) embarked on a vast tour that took in Sicily, Greece, Gaza and north Africa





Old meets older The Colossi of Memnon were the ultimate tourist destination of the second century AD. By the time Hadrian visited them, they were already almost 1,500 years old

A bust of Antinoos, the emperor Hadrian's lover. His sudden death in AD 130 cast a long shadow over the imperial tour of Egypt



he pushed?' has never been resolved.

For those in this inner circle, the death of Hadrian's boyfriend must have blighted the trip (was it 'the holiday from hell'?). It is all too easy to imagine the atmosphere on the boats: the party tiptoeing around the grieving emperor, who was busy planning memorials to his lost love, and even starting the process of turning him into a god. You might well have thought that they would have called the whole cruise off. But they pressed on south. That was probably because Egypt's most celebrated tourist high-spot still lay ahead.

The singing statue

Hadrian's party had already visited the Great Pyramid. What they were even keener to see was the statue on which the verses of Julia Balbilla would soon be inscribed: one of the so-called 'Colossi of Memnon'.

This 18-metre-high edifice has a long and intriguing history. It was originally constructed around 1350 BC, one of a matching pair representing the pharaoh Amenhotep III. This made it a venerable antique, almost 1,500 years old, by the time Hadrian came to visit. But, by then, its name had been changed and it had been credited with miraculous new characteristics. In a wholesale reinterpretation, the colossus was no longer Pharaoh Amenhotep. It was now

believed to represent the mythical Greek hero Memnon, a fighter in the Trojan war, the son of the goddess of the dawn. And what is more, it was said sometimes to make a singing noise first thing in the morning, as if greeting its mother.

One explanation for this is a natural one. At some point in the first century BC, the top of the statue had been damaged, allowing water to penetrate the stone. As the temperature rose in the morning, the drying out of the water in the cracks of the sculpture might have made a hissing – or a singing – noise.

Another explanation suggests that it was more of a scam. At least one ancient writer thought there might have been some boys around the back faking the sound of singing on makeshift musical instruments, to cash in on the tourist trade. Whichever is true, the statue eventually stopped singing. Either the 'boys around the back' found better ways to make money. Or (if you follow the natural explanation), a well-meaning repair of the statue blocked up the cracks, prevented the water getting in, and so stopped the singing.

But for several hundred years the singing statue was the biggest attraction in Egypt. Visitors turned up at dawn hoping that Memnon would perform for them. He couldn't be relied upon, but it was thought a wonderful sign of good luck if he did. Some



Remarkable Romans

To read Mary Beard's article about family life 2,000 years ago, go to [historyextra.com/reviving-roman-voices](https://www.historyextra.com/reviving-roman-voices)



Leaving their mark

For centuries, Roman tourists flocked to one of the Colossi of Memnon to hear it 'sing' – and then carved inscriptions into it, like those shown here

of those who got lucky had their visit commemorated with an inscription carved into the statue's leg (presumably they paid local craftsmen to do the actual carving – at, I imagine, a hefty price). In one of the earliest examples, around AD 20, a Roman by the name of Servius Clemens simply recorded in Latin that he “heard the voice of Memnon and gave thanks”. Two centuries later, in one of the latest inscriptions, a philosopher called Falernus gave a more flowery account in Greek verse of his own experiences. “When he saw his mother, Dawn, dressed in her saffron robe,” the statue “made a sound sweeter than clear speech.”

Disaster averted

It is among this group of 107 inscriptions that we find the four verses, again written in Greek, by Julia Balbilla – as well as a few lines composed by the empress Sabina herself. From these we can reconstruct what happened on the imperial visit in November AD 130. When Balbilla and Sabina first showed up at the statue, it stayed resolutely silent. In her poem entitled ‘When on the first day we did not hear Memnon’, Balbilla made the best of what might have been a PR disaster, suggesting that Memnon had only remained silent “so that lovely Sabina would come back again”. Indeed, they did go back.

Then, probably on the next day, as another poem happily records, “I Balbilla heard the divine voice of Memnon”.

In a poem headed ‘When the emperor Hadrian heard Memnon’, Balbilla records a successful visit by Hadrian himself, most likely on his own. “Seeing Hadrian the ruler of the world,” she writes, “Memnon greeted him as well as he could, before he had even greeted the rays of the sun.” In other words, Memnon appeared to prefer Hadrian over his own mother. And the statue went on to speak to the emperor twice more, making it “clear to everyone that the gods love him”. So, after a rocky start, the visit must finally have seemed like a triumph.

In the more than 50 lines of Balbilla's verses, however, we learn about more than the royal party's encounter with the singing statue. Although we have little information about Balbilla from almost any other source, we can extract a surprising amount about her life and her world-view from the poems.

Balbilla was the descendant on her father's side of the royal family of the eastern kingdom of Commagene, and on her mother's side of a Roman governor of the province of Egypt – and is at pains to highlight this elite ancestry within her poetry. She stresses that one grandfather, Antiochus, had been a king and that the other had been a prestigious

When the statue spoke to Hadrian, he “made it clear to everyone that the gods loved him”



Love boat Cupids on a galley in the Nile, as depicted in a second-century AD mosaic. Romans including Julius Caesar and Prince Germanicus sailed along the river to ancient Egypt's most celebrated landmarks



The verses that Balbilla carved onto the Colossus of Memnon were inspired by the pioneering Greek poet Sappho, who is possibly depicted here in a first-century AD image holding a stylus and wax tablet

scholar. She even calls her father and mother 'king' and 'queen', despite the fact that the effective rule of the royal house of Commagene had ended when her grandfather was ousted by the Roman emperor Vespasian.

There is a pride, almost a pushiness, in how Balbilla vaunts her rank. And she makes no secret of her own scholarship. Her poems feature learned and slightly pretentious references to byways of ancient myth and history. She spends four lines on the deeds of the Persian king Cambyses, who in the sixth century BC had apparently tried to demolish the statue but paid the price with his life – so providing the foil for Balbilla's piety towards Memnon.

Poetry in motion

Balbilla's verses are composed in a style and language that mimics the first Greek female poet, Sappho, who lived around 600 BC on the island of Lesbos. It is almost as if a poet today were to compose perfectly in the manner of Geoffrey Chaucer: a boast of poetic skill, rhetorical sophistication and antiquarian learning.

But there was perhaps even more to it than that. By adopting Sappho's language, Balbilla was reminding her readers of the very beginning of the tradition of female poetry in which she proudly followed. And, by writing up their visits to the statue in that language, she was maybe also hinting at a closeness between herself and the empress Sabina. For Sappho was also famous for her erotic

friendships with young women whom she celebrated in her poetry. (Our term 'Lesbian' comes from the name of Sappho's island.)

All this adds vividly to our picture of Hadrian's tourist party. We can only guess at the precise relationship between Sabina and Balbilla. How close a match it was for that between Hadrian and Antinoos, no one can know. But Balbilla was certainly not some kind of junior companion on the trip, almost a lady-in-waiting to the empress. Her poems give the lie to that, parading her literary skill, scholarly expertise and her royal blood.

My hunch is that she felt her own ancestry far outclassed that of the Roman emperor. Hadrian was new to power; he had been adopted by his predecessor, Trajan, from outside the circles of royalty – from a family of no inherited distinction. The blue-blooded Balbilla came from generations of a royal dynasty, which traced its lineage through king after king, back to a right-hand man of Alexander the Great. And, thanks to her grandfather's service as governor of the province, as well as her own learned study, she probably knew a lot more about Egypt than Hadrian did. Beyond the encounter with Memnon, those were precisely the points she was trying to rub in over the course of her extraordinary poems. **E**

Mary Beard is a classicist, author and broadcaster. The second series of *Being Roman* with Mary Beard will be aired on BBC Radio 4 from 7 May



My hunch is that Balbilla believed her ancestry outclassed that of her fellow tourist Emperor Hadrian



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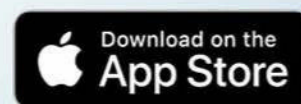
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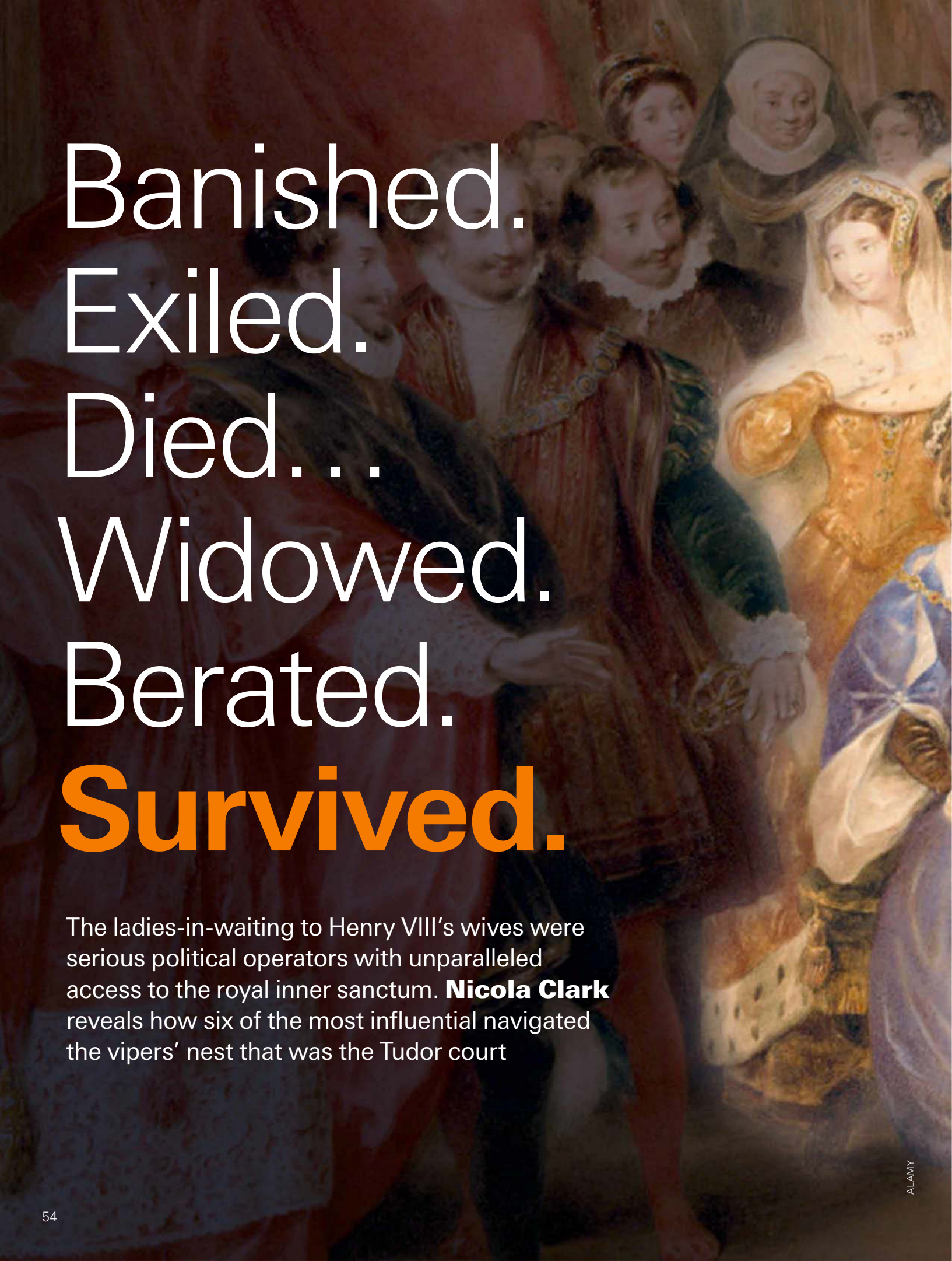
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Banished. Exiled. Died... Widowed. Berated. **Survived.**

The ladies-in-waiting to Henry VIII's wives were serious political operators with unparalleled access to the royal inner sanctum. **Nicola Clark** reveals how six of the most influential navigated the vipers' nest that was the Tudor court

Inside job A 19th-century painting shows Henry VIII meeting Anne Boleyn, as courtiers look on. The role of lady-in-waiting presented aristocratic families with the opportunity to place eyes and ears near the monarch



Tudor ladies-in-waiting

THEY ARE INVISIBLE BUT INDISPENSABLE.

Unremarked, yet always there. Tudor ladies-in-waiting have long been depicted as mere 'scenery' in books, plays and films about the 16th century, a backdrop of pretty faces.

This is accurate – to a point. A queen's ladies were not supposed to draw attention away from her, and they often blend into the background of the surviving source material as well. New archival research, however, reveals that the ladies-in-waiting of Henry VIII's wives were experts at survival, negotiating the competing demands of their families and their queen. They were serious political players who changed the course of history.

Every Tudor queen had ladies-in-waiting – and they were never not there. As the queen's confidantes and her chaperones, their job was to accompany their mistress wherever she went and assist her in any way that she required, from helping her to dress in the morning, to chatting with strangers at a banquet, or dancing in revels.

To be one of the queen's women was to be part of an exclusive set. There were only between 20 and 25 women in 'ordinary', daily, service at any given time. And though it was an honour to be chosen, it was not a soft option. They were on duty all day, every day, and could not leave without royal permission.

Ladies-in-waiting held one of three household ranks corresponding to social status: a few 'great ladies', several more 'ladies and gentlewomen', and a few 'chamberers', still of gentry status but responsible for the more menial tasks. To these were added 'maids of honour', six teenage girls under the supervision of the mother of the maids. Other noblewomen might pop in to visit or to provide temporary cover for an absence as 'extraordinary' ladies-in-waiting.

Vacancies were like gold dust. Every family wanted eyes and ears near the monarch. Foreign queens had their households selected for them before they arrived, but over time all of Henry's consorts could choose their own ladies subject to his approval. Competition was intense. Each queen prioritised family, friends, and those with previous experience who could help her settle into her new role.

Getting into the queen's household was therefore a matter of connections and of keeping one's ear to the ground for whispers of change. Once there, it could be a job for life. Though no woman is known to have served all six wives, several worked for five of the six, balancing their duties at court with their roles as wives, mothers, and estate managers at home. Others spent only a short time at court before leaving to get married.

These women saw and heard everything, and that could make them dangerous. As Henry's reign progressed – as queens died and were divorced, and as the fabric of religion and society was violently rewoven around them – ladies-in-waiting had to make choices about loyalty that simply hadn't existed before, and would never exist like this again.

A 16th-century Holbein portrait of an unknown English lady. For aristocratic women at the time, competition to secure a place in court was intense



Elizabeth Stafford covertly passed information to Catherine of Aragon, shown here in a painting from 1866

THE STAUNCH ALLY

Henry VIII sent her into exile. But **María de Salinas** stood by Catherine of Aragon until the bitter end

María de Salinas was Queen Catherine of Aragon's longest-serving lady-in-waiting, and is remembered by us as the epitome of sisterhood. She came to England with Catherine in 1501, and legend has it that the queen died in her arms in 1536. In fact, new research shows that María's life involved a little less loyalty and a lot more feistiness.

María (c1490–1539) came from a family of Castilian courtiers. In Spain, royal service was a customary route to a good marriage, so María probably didn't expect to be in England for long. She saw Princess Catherine marry the future Henry VIII's elder brother, Prince Arthur, and must have known what did – or didn't – happen on the wedding night.

Five months after the wedding, Arthur was dead. Then began the dreadful period of limbo, when Catherine and her household



THE WRONGED WIFE

Elizabeth Stafford was banished from court after making a bitter enemy of Anne Boleyn

The Tudor court was a whirlpool of political intrigue and backstabbing, giant egos and extra-marital affairs. This vipers' nest could stretch a lady-in-waiting's loyalty to her queen to breaking point. Yet few had that loyalty tested to the same degree as Elizabeth Stafford, Duchess of Norfolk.

Elizabeth (c1497–1558) was a lady-in-waiting to Queen Catherine of Aragon. As the daughter of one powerful nobleman, the Duke of Buckingham, and the young wife of another, Thomas Howard – soon to be Earl of Surrey – her status placed her among the higher rank of the 'ladies' rather than the 'gentlewomen' in the queen's household.

Elizabeth probably joined the court in her late teens, following her marriage in 1512, and remained there while her husband fought on campaign in France and then on the Scottish border at the battle of Flodden where English forces defeated Scottish king James IV. She later wrote that she served the queen "16 years together", but we know that she also spent time at the family homes in East Anglia and gave birth to at least four children.

Elizabeth's court service became complicated as Henry VIII began to question the validity of his marriage. As it became clear that he sought to put Queen Catherine aside in favour of Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth had to make a difficult choice. Anne Boleyn was Elizabeth's niece by marriage. But Elizabeth felt that Catherine was a wronged wife, and she identified strongly with this: her own husband had also taken a mistress, described by Elizabeth as "that harlot".

Rather than follow her husband in support of Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth spoke out in favour of Catherine, and covertly passed information to her. This got her banished from court at Anne Boleyn's demand in 1531, and a year later her husband placed her under house arrest in Redbourn, Hertfordshire. Nevertheless, Elizabeth refused to give him a divorce or return to her marriage, writing to Thomas Cromwell that her life "would be but short" if she did. She remained at Redbourn for the rest of Henry's reign, isolated for her devotion to her mistress and her refusal to put up with her husband's behaviour.

became pawns in a financial battle between her father, Ferdinand of Aragon, and Henry VII over Catherine's dowry. Newly discovered letters written by María to her family back home reveal that she was desperate to leave England, writing with characteristic sarcasm, "this is not a country to stop in unless necessary".

Marriage was her only way out, and she needed her brother Juan to arrange it. Several matches fell through and María's letters throb with palpable anxiety, even defiance. "Do what you will," she fumed, "for I will choose what is best for me."

In 1516 Queen Catherine financed a marriage to William, Lord Willoughby. María sold her Spanish inheritance and became an English noblewoman. She remained a lady-in-waiting and stayed at court after William's death in 1526, using her court contacts to fight a poisonous lawsuit for her daughter's inheritance. By this point she was indeed a staunch ally to the queen, and so she was banished from Catherine's service during the queen's divorce from Henry VIII.

When María heard of Catherine's rapid

decline, she wrote to the king's chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, to ask permission to visit, but left for Kimbolton, the queen's final home, on New Year's Day 1536 without waiting for his reply. Once there, she talked her way into the castle and refused to leave.

After the queen's death, María retired to her estates in Lincolnshire. She was a stern landlord, milking her tenants for all the money that she could, and not surprisingly her house was targeted during the 'Pilgrimage of Grace' rebellion against Henry VIII's rule later that year. The rest of her life was spent quietly, and she died in 1539. We do not know where she was buried.

Catherine of Aragon talks to Henry VIII's ambassador in a c1849 painting. María de Salinas rushed to Catherine's side as she lay gravely ill



THE TRAGIC SCHEMER

Jane Parker was a shrewd political operator – until she overstepped the mark

It was a long, extraordinary – and ultimately tragic – court career. Jane Parker, Viscountess Rochford served in the courts of five Tudor queens, playing a central role in the trial and execution of one, and losing her own life in the downfall of another.

Jane's first recorded appearance in Catherine of Aragon's household was at the Anglo-French summit known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold in June 1520, and a few years later she married courtier George Boleyn. This meant she transferred seamlessly to her sister-in-law Anne Boleyn's service in the early 1530s.

Jane's career faced its first stumbling block with Anne's arrest and execution in 1536, for Jane's husband George was arrested as well. Jane promised to try to intercede for him. This, though, put her in the path of chief investigator, Thomas Cromwell, and it was probably he who extracted crucial evidence from her. The queen, Jane revealed, had said that the king "was not skilful in copulating with a woman", and George had questioned Princess Elizabeth's paternity.

It was enough to lead to his execution.

Jane is often vilified for her role here, but she found herself in a hellishly difficult situation. If her husband was already condemned, she would need Cromwell's help for her future.

She got it. After Anne and George's executions, Jane became part of Jane Seymour's household, and after Seymour's death, served Anne of Cleves. Jane went along with the king's decision to annul his fourth marriage, and gave evidence of an alleged conversation in which Queen Anne seemed to admit the marriage had not been consummated.

By the time Jane became part of the household of Henry VIII's fifth queen, Catherine Howard, she was an experienced courtier. Yet this experience wasn't enough to prevent her from becoming embroiled in an affair that would end in her own death. Not long after entering Catherine's service, Jane apparently began acting as a go-between for the queen's dalliance with the courtier Thomas Culpeper.

Jane must surely have known the



Jane Parker's first recorded appearance as a lady-in-waiting was at the Field of the Cloth of Gold summit, shown here in a c1545 painting

grave danger in which her actions placed her. And so it proved when, in 1541, she was arrested for her role in the alleged affair. She was terrified. Her evidence was contradictory; soon, she "went mad", in fear for her life. The king was determined to have her punished and promptly changed the law to allow execution of the insane. And so, on 13 February 1542, within the grounds of the Tower of London, Jane became the first lady-in-waiting in history to be executed as a direct result of her service.

THE BRIGHT SPARK

How **Mary Howard** defied Henry VIII... and lived to tell the tale

Like so many ladies-in-waiting, Mary Howard (c1519–c1555) secured her place at court thanks to family connections. She was the daughter of Elizabeth Stafford and a lady-in-waiting to her first cousin Anne Boleyn (in fact, she made her debut carrying Anne's train at her creation as Marquess of Pembroke in 1532). And, like both her mother and her cousin, Mary was no stranger to controversy.

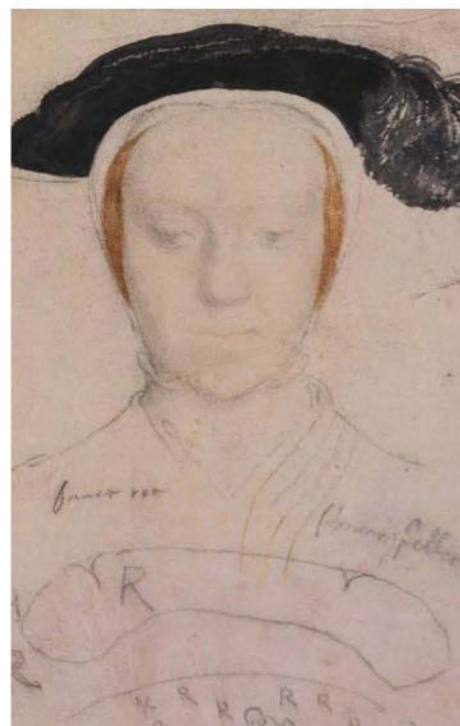
Even before she arrived in court, Mary's marriage was a matter of contention. In 1530 her mother wanted her to marry the young Earl of Derby. But Anne Boleyn interfered to procure an alliance for Mary with the king's illegitimate son Henry Fitzroy. Anne's intervention caused a family row at court. Mary's own views aren't recorded.

Intelligent and creative, Mary was part of a set that might be called the bright young things of the 1530s. With her friends Margaret Douglas, the king's niece, and Mary

Shelton, she kept a manuscript book into which she and her circle copied their favourite poems. They added pointed comments and cynical banter in the margins: evidence of the cultural awareness of ladies-in-waiting.

Mary was unexpectedly widowed at only 17, shortly after Anne Boleyn's execution, and became embroiled in a battle to claim her jointure (money promised by the groom's family) from her father-in-law, the king. To avoid having to pay, Henry tried instead to marry her off to Thomas Seymour, brother of Henry's third wife, Jane.

The match was agreed, the men poised to arrange the finances, but suddenly: nothing. Mary had vetoed the alliance and simply left court, successfully defying the king. She spent the rest of his reign living under her father's roof and exploring reformist religion, with occasional visits to court as a lady-in-waiting 'in extraordinary'.



A portrait of Mary Howard from the 1530s. Henry VIII wanted to marry her off, but she had other plans



THE LIVE WIRE

Anne Basset's career in court was almost scuppered by her own quick temper

Anne Basset fought hard to join a queen's household. Her stepfather, Arthur, Viscount Lisle, was the lieutenant of Calais, and the family's letter collection – the *Lisle Letters* – shows that they worked hard to maintain their connections in England. Getting one of the Basset girls into the court was a means to this end.

The family's London agent reported every possible vacancy, spoke to family friends and those with influence, and directed Anne's mother to send gifts to certain ladies-in-waiting. Finally, while eating quails sent by Lady Lisle in 1537, Jane Seymour declared that Anne (c1520–c1558) and her sister should be sent over and she would choose one. Anne, the bolder, sparklier, "fairer" sister, was selected.

There was a flurry of activity to get her ready to join the household before Queen Jane gave birth. Anne needed new clothes, and was told that as one of the six maids of honour, she would receive £10 per year. No sooner had she taken up her position than it was pulled from beneath her: Queen Jane died only a month or so later.

Anne was sent to friends and relatives until a new queen should arrive. The king had promised that she should "have her place whensoever the time shall come". But Anne was impatient, quarrelling with her temporary guardian and with her mother in typical teenage fashion. A set of pearls that Lady Lisle had sent were "all rags", Anne complained behind her mother's back, and was told off and made to apologise. She did resume her position on Anne of Cleves' arrival, and served both Catherine Howard and Katherine Parr as a maid of honour as well.

ALAMY



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THE FIERY REFORMER

Katherine Willoughby's

devotion to Henry VIII's final wife landed her in mortal danger

Katherine Willoughby is best known for serving Katherine Parr in the 1540s – a position that pitched her into the heart of the battle between religious reformers and conservatives. Yet, as the daughter of María de Salinas, Willoughby (1519–80) would have been familiar with the royal court long before that.

In 1533, Katherine married her guardian, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. It was a match that raised eyebrows: she was only 14 to his 49. It was nevertheless a happy union. Katherine helped her husband to suppress the Pilgrimage of Grace rebellion in Lincolnshire in 1536, and the couple were in charge of meeting Anne of Cleves on her arrival in Kent in December 1539.

When Katherine Parr became queen in 1543, Katherine Willoughby quickly became part of her inner circle. Both had mothers who had been ladies-in-waiting to Queen Catherine of Aragon, and both were close to Princess Mary.

Both, too, were of an evangelical religious persuasion, interested in new, reformist ideas. After being widowed in 1545, Katherine Willoughby's religious interests deepened, and she became a target for government ministers intent on bringing down the queen. While being tortured on the rack in 1546, 'prophetess' Anne Askew was asked repeatedly whether she had had contact with the



An 18th-century engraving of Katherine Willoughby, who was targeted by powerful religious conservatives in the 1540s

Duchess of Suffolk. Luckily for Katherine, Askew did not implicate her, but Katherine remained at loggerheads with conservatives like Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester. Outspoken and quick-tempered, she later named her dog 'Gardiner' so that she might publicly call him to heel.

At Henry VIII's death in 1547, Katherine was summoned to court by Queen Katherine. She helped the queen move residences, attended her at the funeral, and knew about her secret marriage to Thomas Seymour. Loyal to the end, Katherine raised the former queen's daughter after her death in 1548 until the little girl's own death a few years later. She did not serve as a lady-in-waiting again. **H**

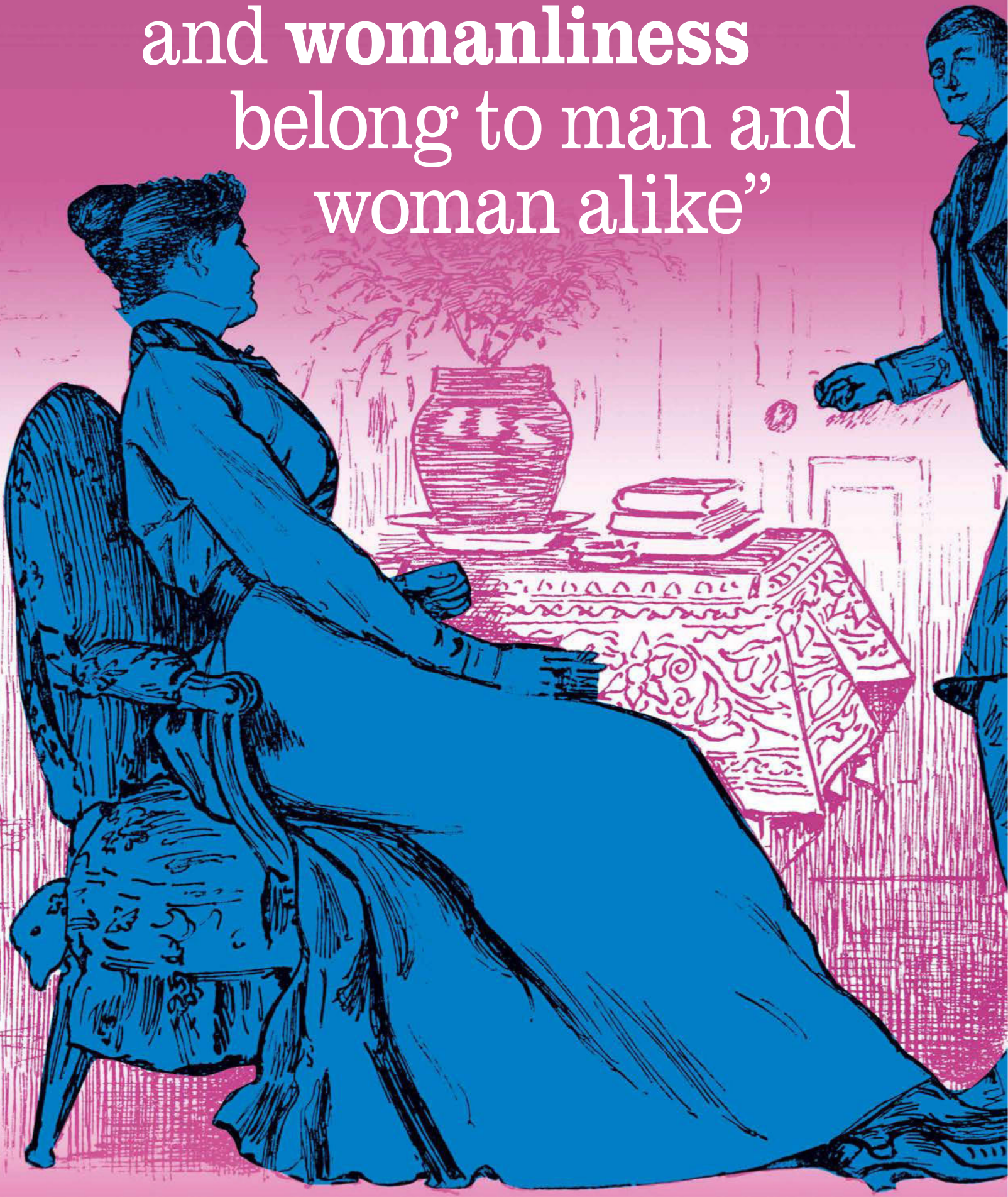
Nicola Clark is a senior lecturer in early modern history at the University of Chichester. Her latest book, *The Waiting Game: The Untold Story of the Women Who Served the Tudor Queens*, was published by W&N in April



For more on the Tudor court, watch the BBC One series *Six Wives with Lucy Worsley*: bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0854cjm



**“Manliness
and womanliness
belong to man and
woman alike”**



As the Victorian age neared its end, a vibrant cultural movement emerged that flipped conventional notions of femininity and masculinity on their head.

Jad Adams reveals how a new generation challenged stereotypical gender identities



Blurred lines

Two 'New Women' as depicted in a satirical 19th-century cartoon. The era witnessed the emergence of new forms of gender identity – for both men and women

In the 1890s, two new social identities emerged that represented the first widespread challenge to gender stereotypes in Britain. This was the time of the 'New Woman', who possessed levels of daring regarded as masculine, and of the effeminate 'New Man,' who loved 'art for art's sake'. Her determined persistence to go her own way, and his foppish indifference to soldiering and other established notions of 'manliness', were both deemed equally appalling to Victorian elders.

Indeed, to some commentators, it seemed as if men and women were losing their distinct characteristics. As a *Punch* magazine writer noted in a verse titled 'Sexomania':

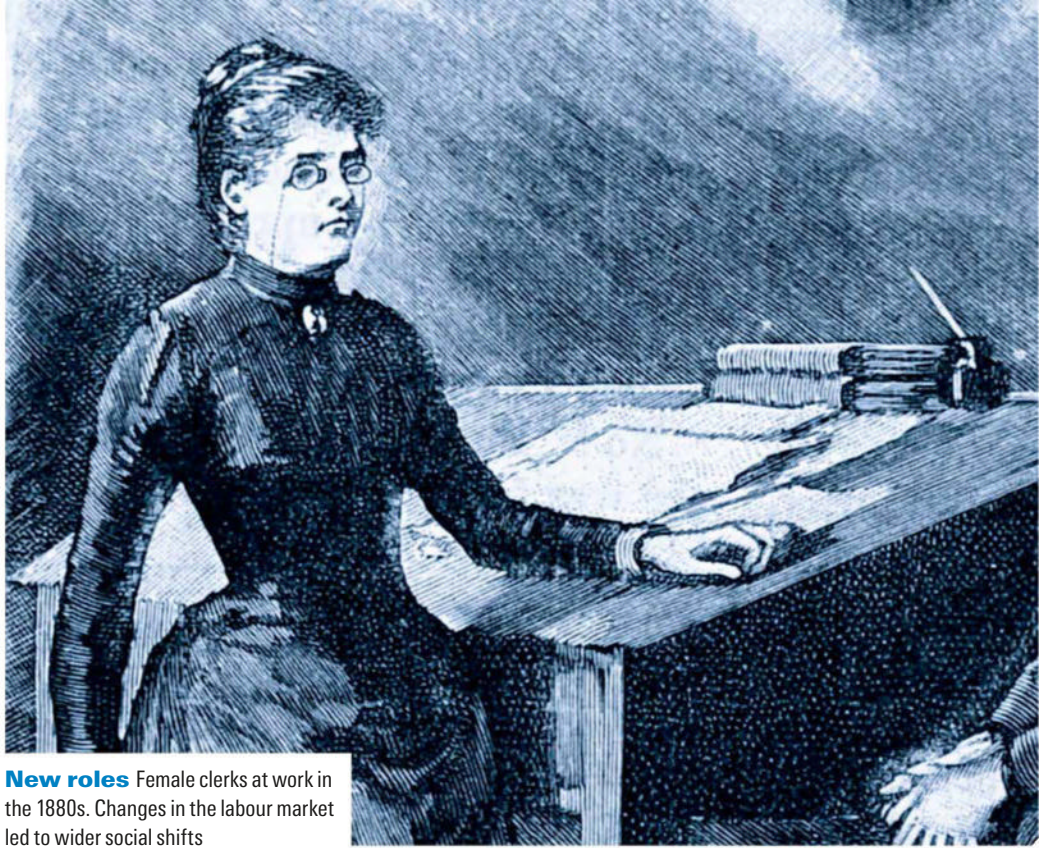
When Adam delved and Eve span,
No one need ask which was the man.
Bicycling, footballing, scarce human,
All wonder now "Which is the woman?"
But a new fear my bosom vexes;
To-morrow there may be no sexes!
Unless, as end to all the pother,
Each one in fact becomes the other.

This was a seismic shift, and one partly driven by changes in the UK population. By the 1890s, women outnumbered men by around a million, and by the 1901 census, the gap had grown to 1.25 million. There were not enough husbands to go around due to the higher death rate of men from their more dangerous jobs, their tendency to violence, and because of the number of men who had headed abroad with the armed forces or imperial administration.

In many middle-class families, the lack of men became a significant issue, because daughters were traditionally provided for by their fathers until their husbands 'took over'. If they did not end up marrying and their parents died, they then became the responsibility of their elder brothers – leading in some cases to family tensions.

Yet this demographic shift also coincided with a high point in the social movement of women's education and independence, which had been under way since the mid-19th century. For the first time, large numbers of women who had received a good or moderate education became more determined to live away from their families and earn their own keep. This blend of factors led to a continuing female advance, and new questions arose regarding women's roles in the family, the institution of marriage, and the workplace.

The New Woman phenomenon developed slowly, but became widespread in the 1890s due to the expansion of urban employment opportunities for women caused by the new technologies of typewriting and telephony



New roles Female clerks at work in the 1880s. Changes in the labour market led to wider social shifts

and the print industry, which needed writers and illustrators. The labour market was quick to recognise that women could do the same office jobs as men, but be paid less. These were young, middle-class women, often with some education. Some worked in accountancy and the law, though they were not permitted to take professional qualifications.

Thus the 'New Woman' was born. With her bicycle, cigarette, necktie, and dark jacket that hid the grime of public transport and office life, she looked and behaved markedly differently to women of previous decades.

Aggressive independence

Not everyone was enamoured of the New Woman, however. The term itself had been popularised by Maria Louise Ramé, an English novelist and French wine merchant's daughter who went by the name of Ouida. She wrote scathingly of the archetype and her view of its proponents' "fierce vanity, her undigested knowledge, her over-weening estimate of her own value and her fatal want of all sense of the ridiculous". Another

commentator, meanwhile, referred to "a somewhat aggressive air of independence which finds birth in the length of her stride".

In some cases, the New Woman was almost seen as another form of humanity. The journalist Eliza Lynn Linton characterised her as masculine not just in behaviour, but physique: "The bass voice, flat chest, and lean hips of a woman who has physically failed in her rightful development."

The newspaper editor Frederick Greenwood also decided to publish his views on the subject, writing in an article entitled 'Women – Wives or Mothers?' that the redundant female birth-rate threatened "more revolutions than all the forces of the anarchists in active combination". Greenwood chose to share his thoughts under the pseudonym 'A Woman' – a gender misappropriation partly driven by devilment, and partly to give the piece a sense of authenticity for his readers.

Indeed, while women were taking on postures and pursuits previously regarded as masculine, men were travelling in the other direction. Like Greenwood, the author Arnold Bennett wrote for the magazine *Woman* (of which he was assistant editor) under the names 'Gwendolen' and 'Barbara', and reviewed books in *Home and Hearth* under the name 'Sarah Volatile'.

At around the same time, the advance of aestheticism – an artistic movement prioritising beauty above function – was giving men the opportunity of a 'feminine' creative outlet that drove them to create 'the house beautiful'. As the character Gwendolen Fairfax declares in Oscar Wilde's 1895 play *The Importance of Being Earnest*, "the home seems to me to be the proper sphere for the man".

**With her bicycle,
cigarette and necktie,
the 'New Woman'
looked markedly
different to women
of previous decades**



ABOVE: Women enjoy life on two wheels in this 1895 photograph. The bicycle was a key part of the image of the 'New Woman' LEFT: Poet and essayist Richard Le Gallienne, one of the leading proponents of the latest gender-blurring styles

Wilde had himself come to fame as editor of *The Woman's World* and an as aesthete. As the 1880s turned into the 1890s, however, aestheticism morphed into a new movement: the decadents, who revelled in the artificial to a degree the average Victorian considered abhorrent. The decadents drew inspiration from ancient Rome and from France, which was considered morally suspect by respectable people. While the movement's theories of art were the preserve of elites in London, Manchester, Edinburgh and the university towns, their influence was widespread on fashion, advertisements and home décor.

Velvet knee breeches

A 'New Man' who came to prominence around this time was the poet, essayist and critic Richard Le Gallienne, the son of a Birkenhead brewery manager. He moved to London, changed his name (he added the 'Le' to imply a French connection) and took to sporting velvet knee breeches and long hair. Yet he was also evidence that the decadent man was not necessarily homosexual. In fact, he was undeniably what was called a 'ladies' man', taking full advantage of his attractiveness to

women and the sexual freedom that New Women allowed themselves.

In 1895, Le Gallienne declared that gender was a matter of custom and personal choice, and nothing more. Writing in his essay *The Arbitrary Classification of Sex*, he explained: "There is no such thing as looking manly or womanly. There is looking beautiful or ugly, distinguished or commonplace... The essentials of 'manliness' and 'womanliness' belong to man and woman alike – the externals are purely artistic considerations, and subject to the vagaries of fashion."

It was a kind of thinking that upended conventional certainties. "I was bewildered, it sounded somehow as if there were three sexes," wrote the novelist Henry James in a story for quarterly journal *The Yellow Book* in 1894. Set within Britain's hedonistic literary scene, the narrator of the tale, Neil Paraday, is forced to ask whether a fellow author named 'Miss Forbes' is a gentleman, upon which he is informed, "it wouldn't be 'Miss' – there's a wife!". Dora Forbes, it transpires, is a man with a big red moustache. "In the age we live in, one gets lost amongst the genders and the pronouns," laments Paraday.

WHEN WILLIAM BECAME FIONA

The Scottish author who made a name writing as a woman

William Sharp (1855–1905) was a late Victorian author and mystic who wrote under his own name and as his female alter-ego, Fiona Macleod.

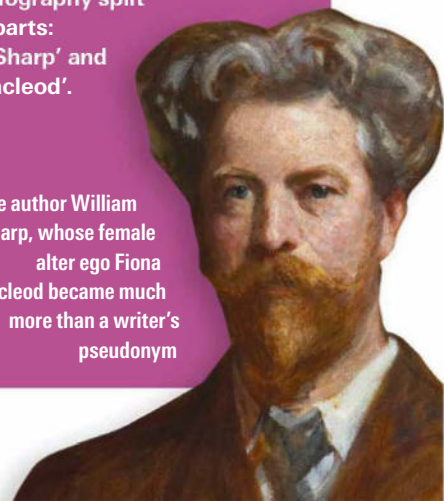
Born in Paisley, Scotland, Sharp moved to London in his early twenties to pursue a career as a poet and art critic, before moving into magazine publishing. In 1892, he edited a one-off periodical called *The Pagan Review*, calling for the widespread adoption of neo-paganism, which he believed would abolish inequality between men and women.

The author's interest in gender fluidity would become more apparent by 1893, however, when he began writing as the Highlander Fiona Macleod, whose lyrical novels contributed to the birth of Britain's Celtic Revival movement. Inspired by tales from Scottish folklore, Sharp's work as Macleod was not only better reviewed than his previous output, but more commercially successful, too. In fact, so devoted was Sharp to his alter ego that he would maintain a voluminous correspondence with publishers and fellow authors as Macleod, without revealing his true identity.

Fiona Macleod was not merely a writer's pseudonym, however. Sharp maintained that she had a separate existence, and as such, she was even given her own entry in *Who's Who*. "I am tempted to believe I am half a woman," Sharp wrote in a letter to his friend Catherine Ann Janvier in 1895.

Sharp's wife, Elizabeth, accepted her husband's dual nature, calling him Wilfion. After his death, she wrote a biography split into two parts: 'William Sharp' and 'Fiona Macleod'.

The author William Sharp, whose female alter ego Fiona Macleod became much more than a writer's pseudonym





Such lifestyle changes went beyond literary circles, however. In March 1894, the month before the launch of *The Yellow Book*, the rigid, sanctimonious William Gladstone retired as Britain's prime minister. He was replaced by Lord Rosebery, whose effortless style both inspired and irritated. Rosebery was a typical example of why respectable Victorians condemned the aristocracy as idle and decadent, with the Tory Lord Curzon criticising what he saw as Rosebery's "feminine sensitiveness to criticism". There had also, in recent years, been numerous scandals touching the ruling class: Prince Albert Victor had been rumoured to visit gay brothels, and there were countless stories about the Prince of Wales's dissolute lifestyle.

Rosebery remained reticent about his private life, but he was widely rumoured to be homosexual – with commentators noting his preference for the company of "smart young men". One such man was the 26-year-old Viscount Drumlanrig, son of boxing pioneer Lord Queensberry. Enraged by the duo's close relationship, he followed Rosebery on holiday to Germany and had to be restrained from engaging the then foreign secretary in a fist fight.

Famously, Queensberry later turned his wrath on Wilde because of his relationship with another of his sons, Lord Alfred Douglas. According to Queensberry, Wilde was a "damned cur and coward of the Rosebery type". The story of Wilde's downfall has been much told: he was involved in three scandalous 1895 trials before being convicted of homosexual offences and sentenced to two years' hard labour in Reading Gaol.

Notwithstanding sporadic gestures of sympathy, Wilde's trials crushed the nascent decadent movement in Britain. While there may have been feelings for him from many New Women, the debacle consigned male behaviour regarded as 'effeminate' to a cultural underworld.

The empire strikes back

If the 19th century had seen gains for women and men in a blurring of gender identities, the dawn of the 20th century would see a reassertion of 'maleness' in the exercise of that most traditionally masculine pursuit: war. In 1899, shortly after the Wilde trials and the backlash against the decadents, the Second Boer War began. It was a shock to the complacency of empire, and was the harbinger of a decline in

the influence of the artistic imagination.

The traditional gender roles that had sustained the British empire – with clearly defined soldiers, housewives and mothers – may have been under attack, but now they fought back. As a 1905 book entitled *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* admonished, "the emancipated Englishwoman of the age used her freedom for selfish rather than national ends". The Boer War hero Robert Baden Powell was similarly critical, noting that the Roman empire had "[fallen] at last, chiefly because the young Romans gave up soldiering and manliness altogether". Through the creation of his Scouting Movement, he was going to make sure that the British empire didn't follow a similar path.

Indeed, from 1899 on, Britain entered a resolutely masculine phase in which the national effort was focused on trying to avoid, recovering from, or preparing for three major

conflicts. In the world wars, women took on men's roles in industry – but after those conflicts, they were expected to return to the domestic sphere. By and large they did, comforted by the peace of domesticity and the desire for family life as a counterpoint to the horrors of conflict. In the 1920s, some women took advantage of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act and went into professions such as law or accountancy – but these were women in a man's world, and there was no repetition of the erosion of gender stereotypes that had been apparent in the 1890s.

It was in the post-1945 period that people born during and after the Second World War again started challenging strict gender classifications. The era of peace, prosperity and renewal in the west led to a questioning of values in every area, with an explosion of new expressions in politics, music and the arts. Sixty years after the New Man and New Woman, gender again became more mutable, with men wearing their hair long and women wearing trouser suits and jeans. In the 1960s, drag and gender changing became acceptable once more, at first for comedians and then in music where performers wore make up and sometimes, like Mick Jagger in 1969, dresses. Soon unisex fashions became a familiar sight – as they still are today. **H**

Jad Adams is a historian and author of *Decadent Women: Yellow Book Lives* (Reaktion, 2023)



ABOVE: Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas pictured in c1893.

The scandal sparked by their relationship proved a major blow to the decadent movement LEFT: A c1880 photo of Lord Rosebery, whose perceived "feminine sensitiveness" was scorned by some critics

**Oscar Wilde's trial
consigned male
behaviour regarded
as 'effeminate' to a
cultural underworld**

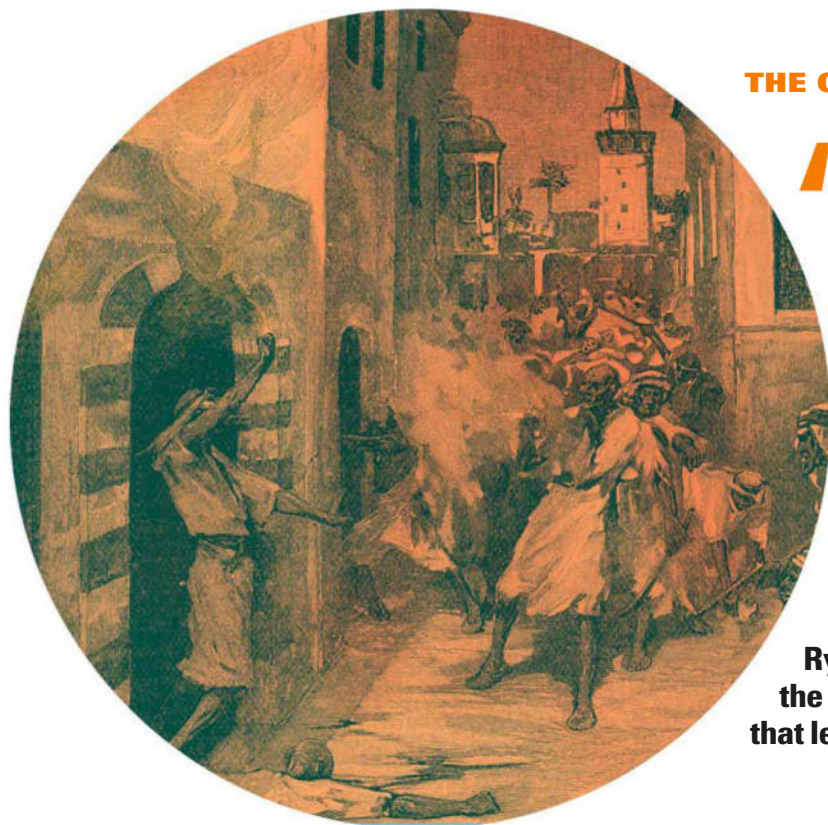
ANIMAL HISTORY

“This is a moving exploration of the place of cats in the modern world”

Andrew Flack on a history of our feline fascination > page 73



BOOKS



THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

// The result of these conflicting forces was a wave of violence across Damascus without parallel in the region's history //

Ryan Gingeras rates a new account of the simmering 19th-century tensions that led to bloodshed in the Middle East > page 70

SOCIAL HISTORY

“Over the course of the 20th century, nostalgia has sometimes been co-opted for noxious political ends”

Hannah Skoda praises a look at the history of our longing for days gone by > page 74

17TH-CENTURY HISTORY

“Throughout, we are immersed in the ‘candlelit chaos’ of Restoration England”

Emily Brand on a female-centric tale of scandal and spycraft > page 72

INTERVIEW

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones charts the tumultuous, transgressive lives of the Cleopatras > page 66



“Ancient Egypt survived because of the wise rulership of the Cleopatras”

LLOYD LLEWELLYN-JONES talks to Matt Elton about the seven queens who shared the name Cleopatra, and how they were able to shape the ancient world in their image

Matt Elton: The fact that there were multiple Cleopatras perhaps shouldn't have come as a surprise to me — but it did. Why do you think the existence of the other Cleopatras is overlooked?

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones: It's because of the dominance of Cleopatra VII — the Cleopatra, the indigo-eyed, Liz Taylor Cleopatra. That's who we think of when we think of Cleopatra. The way in which her identity has been constructed has led us to see her as a lone wolf, a unique woman in the ancient world. The idea of one woman stepping out of the patriarchy to achieve amazing things has been very persuasive.

But she was not a lone wolf at all. There was a whole family of women behind her who formed the template for what she was able to become. Without the other six Cleopatras, it would have been impossible for Cleopatra the seventh to do what she did. So although her life and ambitions are remarkable, they are nonetheless better observed in the context of the dynasty that produced her.

You write in your book that the history of the Cleopatras begins not in Egypt, but further to the east. What was the empire into which the first of the Cleopatras was born, and what do we need to know about the geopolitical situation at the time of her birth?

By the second century BC, the Hellenistic period had already been going for about 150 years. It was a world forged following the death of Alexander the Great, and his empire being split up between rival generals. Cleopatra I was born into the house of Seleucus, which owned essentially all of what's now Syria, Palestine, Israel and swathes of Mesopotamia as well. The first Cleopatra was the daughter of a man named Antiochus III, who even in his lifetime was known as 'the Great'. He was a formidable man who extended his empire as far as

he could — as far as the border with Egypt, which at the time was a superpower ruled by the Ptolemies. They were the descendants of Ptolemy, another of Alexander's generals, and the Ptolemies and the Seleucids had been locking horns for roughly a century by this point, with land-grabs going on constantly across the border.

The two sides were particularly squabbling over one piece of land: a part of what we now think of as the Beqaa valley in Lebanon. The marriage of the princess Cleopatra to Egyptian pharaoh Ptolemy V was Antiochus III's way of offering an olive branch to the Egyptians, but it was also a way for him to get influence within the Egyptian court. So there was a double deal going on.

Cleopatra I headed to Alexandria in 193 BC at the age of roughly 17. What was the Egypt that she encountered like?

Even though she had been brought up in the very fine city of Antioch, I think she would have been in awe of Alexandria. It was the Greek centre of this world; basically, a colonialist power had imprinted itself on traditional Egypt. The north of Egypt — Alexandria and the Nile Delta — had a very Hellenised population. In fact, the Ptolemies offered free land and tax rebates to attract Greek-speaking settlers to the area. But as you went further down into Egypt you arrived at the heart of the Egyptian population — Egypt for the Egyptians.

The fact that Alexandria had never completely aligned to Egypt had created a strange disconnect between the world of Alexandria and its ruling family and the rest of Egypt. Indeed, there had been revolts against the Ptolemies by the local Egyptian population — but by the time Cleopatra I arrived, a synergy had developed between the Greek settlers and Egypt's local populations. This was very much fostered by the royal house itself: the first Ptolemies were keen to be seen both as Greek Hellenistic rulers and traditional pharaohs, and to do that they courted the traditional priests of Egypt and looked after the traditional cults of the Egyptian gods. So they had this double-faced, Janus approach to rulership — which, by and large, was working for them.

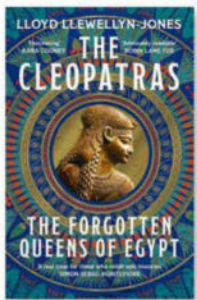
The idea of looking in two directions is also interesting with regard to Cleopatra's loyalties. How much was that an issue?

Dynastic marriages are interesting. What role should a princess play when she goes into a marital home? There was always an element of the Egyptian court that questioned Cleopatra's loyalty to the Egyptian crown, and spread rumours that Egypt would go to ruin because of Cleopatra making sure that her father had a strong influence.

But that's not what happened. Cleopatra I was remarkably loyal to her husband and to the Egyptian populace. The way she made a mark on the Egyptian court was by carefully fostering a good relationship with the Egyptian courtiers. She had a lesson to learn in that regard, because the queen she succeeded had been killed in a court coup. And so, knowing that it was very easy for the Egyptian court to get rid of a queen, she decided to play the long game.

What do we need to know about the family history of Ptolemy V, the man Cleopatra I married?

It was probably the most dysfunctional family in antiquity — which is saying something. Ptolemy V was a pretty ineffectual pharaoh, who was very happy to sit back and let his ministers do his work for him and be managed by his courtiers. What's also notable about the Ptolemies more generally is that they had settled on the custom of pharaohs marrying their sisters. This was not just dynastic incest by



**The Cleopatras:
The Forgotten
Queens of Egypt**

by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
(Wildfire, 384 pages, £25)



PROFILE

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones is professor in ancient history at the University of Cardiff. His previous books include *Persians: The Age of the Great Kings* (Wildfire, 2022)

PHOTOGRAPH BY
JENI NOTT

name but by physical union: Ptolemy V, for instance, was the son of a brother-sister marriage.

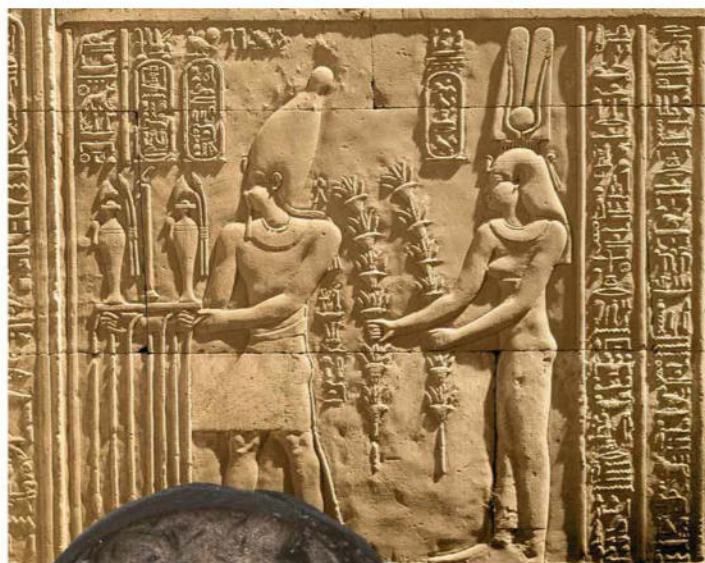
We can explain this theologically. The goddess Isis had a child with her brother Osiris – who essentially represented the living pharaoh. In the Greek world, Zeus married and slept with his sister Hera. So incestuous blood heightened the Ptolemies' claim as god kings.

But then the dynasty encountered a problem: Ptolemy V didn't have any sisters. This is why Cleopatra I had been brought into Egypt – as a kind of pragmatic decision. What's interesting, though, is that after she'd been on the throne for about a decade, Cleopatra I was honoured with the title 'beloved sister of the king'. So they harked back to the idea of incest as much as they could, stretching what 'sister' meant to allow it to happen.

By approximately 176 BC, both Cleopatra I and Ptolemy V were dead. What happened next?

Cleopatra I had given birth to three children, and the eldest son was set to go on to the throne, but he was still too young to rule at the time his father died. Cleopatra I had been made regent, which was the first time that had happened – and the fact that the court didn't make any fuss shows they obviously regarded her as a very capable woman. We don't think there were any suspicious circumstances surrounding her death, at the age of about 45, and she was succeeded by her eldest son, Ptolemy VI, who married his full-blood sister Cleopatra II.

But there was also a royal spare who wasn't willing to take a back seat. His name was Ptolemy VIII, but he was known in antiquity as Psychon – which means something like 'fatty'. I've called him Potbelly, because it describes him so well. He's one of the most egregious characters in the whole of ancient history – a tyrant to his fingertips. He was placed on the throne alongside his brother and sister for a while, meaning that for a few years there was a very strange, and not particularly comfortable, tripartite monarchy. Certainly, there was no love lost between Cleopatra II and Potbelly.



ABOVE: A stone relief (332–330 BC) displaying figures including Cleopatra III making offerings to the gods
LEFT: A Ptolemaic coin decorated with the head of Cleopatra I, who is depicted as the goddess Isis

// It's important to be able to walk into a world in which incest was acceptable and mortals were seen as living gods, but to still see them as real people capable of loving and hurting each other //

You write that the Cleopatras have not fared well in scholarship because, perhaps, they are "simply too melodramatic". A vivid example of such melodrama is what's said to have occurred on Cleopatra II's 55th birthday. What happened?

It's a dreadful scenario – a Grand Guignol spectacle. Cleopatra II and Potbelly had married after the death of her first husband, and they'd had a son, Memphites. He and his father had quarrelled, and it looked like the situation was irreconcilable, so he'd been taken out of Egypt.

At the time of Cleopatra II's birthday, Potbelly had been with his son in Cyprus. Back in Alexandria, the queen had received lots of presents, including a large box. Cleopatra opened it – to discover Memphites' dismembered corpse inside. That was the kind of man Potbelly was: if marking his authority meant slaughtering his own flesh and blood, so be it.

You might ask: why did Potbelly do that to his son and heir? The answer is: he had another two sons and another ready-made family, because the *other* upsetting thing about this scenario is that Potbelly had also married his niece, Cleopatra II's youngest daughter, Cleopatra III. The fact he was married to mother and daughter at the same time did not, as this story attests, make for a happy home.

This story highlights a strange aspect of this history: it features human characters with whom it's possible to empathise, but a society with norms and values markedly different from our own. How do we go about making sense of that?

That's a really perceptive reading. It's important to be able to walk into a world in which incest was acceptable and mortals were seen as living gods and goddesses, but to still see them as real people capable of loving and hurting each other. That's why nicknames such as Potbelly are vital: it makes them human. Otherwise, they're just lists of names and dates that mean nothing.

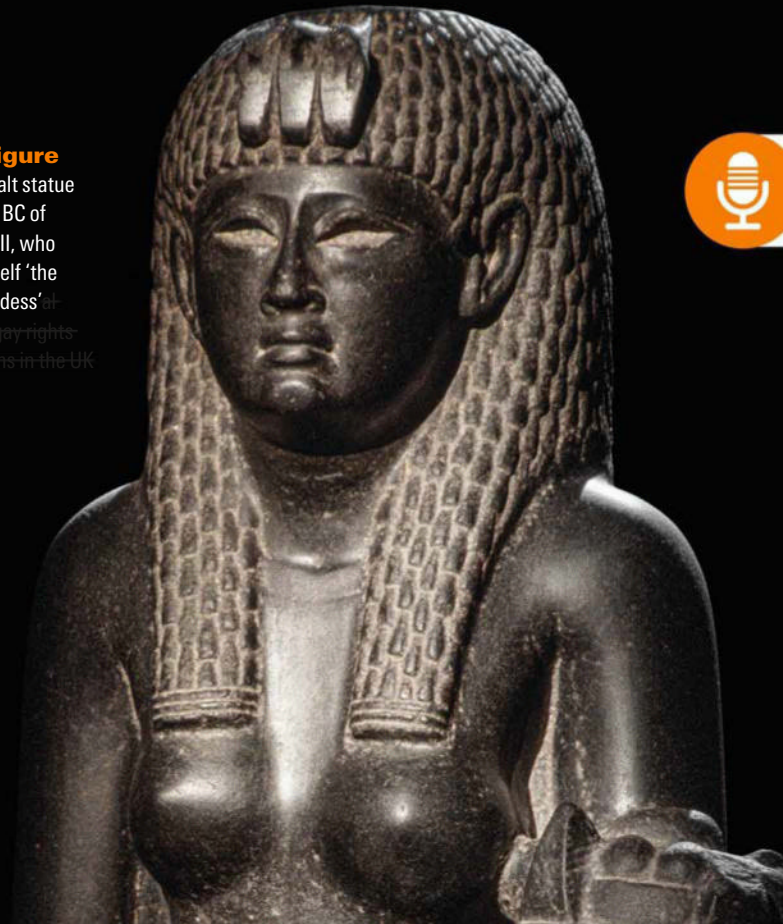
Those nicknames also reveal a lot about their characters and the ways they were viewed. Cleopatra III, for instance, was given a vicious nickname – a slang word for female genitalia – which tells us a lot about how she was seen. I wanted to depict *all* of the Cleopatras as flesh and blood as far as possible, because it's only by doing so that we can make sense of the macabre, outrageous incidents they experienced.

You write that Cleopatra III alone makes for a fascinating psychological case study. What was her story?

She was probably the most formidable of all the Cleopatras, with a sense of narcissism and self-promotion that puts even Liz Taylor's Cleopatra in the shade. She amassed more religious and royal titles for herself than any other Egyptian queen. I think we can look to her background to explain this: her brothers had all been killed and she had no obvious person to marry, so got into the bed of her uncle Potbelly. This has sometimes been presented as a kind of Lolita scenario – of him grooming her – but I don't think that's what happened. She was far too knowing, and probably gave Potbelly children willingly.

Iconic figure

A black basalt statue from 51–30 BC of Cleopatra VII, who named herself ‘the newest goddess’ at prominent gay rights organisations in the UK



Why is the Hellenistic era overlooked?

Listen to an extended version of our interview with Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones at historyextra.com/podcast



history’s great warmongering civilisations, and I think the Ptolemies knew their time would be up if they didn’t play the game.

But the Cleopatras did play the game brilliantly in a way their husbands simply couldn’t match. There is no doubt whatsoever that sexual politics was a key part of that. Cleopatra VII’s successes were down to sexual politics as well as her brilliance as a ruler: her womanhood helped her alongside her intellect and her brilliance. Her ability to switch characters was key, too: Mark Anthony was a blustering man who liked booze and coarse entertainments, so she performed that kind of music-hall turn for him, whereas Julius Caesar was drawn to her intellect. She used her gender to create a bubble of security for Egypt. The same had been true of her great-aunt, Cleopatra V, who is my favourite of the Cleopatras – she was the first queen regnant since the Pharaonic period, and really wasn’t afraid to take on these big male figures.

We should end where we began, then, with Cleopatra VII. How does knowing more about the lives of her predecessors help us recontextualise her story?

Cleopatra VII was a clever woman and she knew her history. When, towards the end of her life, Mark Antony doled out the east of the Roman empire to Cleopatra and her children, she named herself Cleopatra Thea Philopator – ‘the newest goddess’. That was clearly in homage to two former Cleopatras: her great-great-grandmother Cleopatra III, who had taken on the living role of Isis, and one of her aunts, Cleopatra Thea, who had dominated Seleucid history for decades. She was deliberately allying herself to her illustrious ancestors, and because she couldn’t really look to the men of her family for any sort of influence, it had to be the women. I think we need to do the same: when we put Cleopatra VII into the context of the remarkable women who preceded her, we can begin to understand her motives, what she was up against, and what she was able to do.

Why do you think she has so dominated our view of this history?

Cleopatra VII has never been lost in the imagination. She was her own, brilliant public-relations expert anyway, but from the moment of her carefully stage-managed death she entered into the popular consciousness. She has been claimed by every successive historical era and society as its own. She has stayed in our imaginations because she is elastic enough to be stretched into being whatever we want her to be: a femme fatale clad in gold lamé in a 1960s spectacle, or as a champion of Black Lives Matter. She is so flexible because she is, in many respects, untouchable: we’re dealing with legend, not reality. I wanted to get back to the root of that reality, because it’s there that she’s most fascinating.

Finally, why do all of the Cleopatras matter?

They offer us a shining moment in the wider story of women’s history, and particularly that of antiquity in which women were often marginalised. We do our best to try to find female voices, but they’re hard to come across – and here, upfront and centre, we have the achievements of a remarkable, if unorthodox, group of women. And that in itself makes them worth studying. **H**

Yet I think the situation does account for some of her self-aggrandisement later in life. She dominated her sons, Ptolemy IX and X, taking precedence over them in religious rituals and court ceremonials. I’m sure this harked back to when she was young, when she could have been cast out of the dynasty with no role to play of any kind – she was making sure that would never happen. That is, I suppose, why she seems to have had no warmth about her at all. Even though Ptolemy IX had fallen in love with his sister-wife, Cleopatra IV, for instance, she forced them to divorce because it didn’t suit her politically.

I don’t want it to sound as if I’m depicting this as ‘women’s interfering’. Cleopatra III saw the politics behind relationships first and feelings only afterwards. I wanted to cut her some slack, and show how she, and all the other Cleopatras, were brilliant politicians. Indeed, I think we judge Cleopatra III more harshly than Potbelly, for instance, simply because she was a woman – and it seems to me that that’s seen as the greatest crime of *all* the Cleopatras. They did everything men did, but are judged differently because they were women and are seen as having transgressed boundaries. Now is the time to put that reading aside. I’m aware that I’ve written a very feminist take on the Cleopatras, but it’s also an earnest take on their powers and prerogatives.

You think the Cleopatras genuinely did have power, then?

Yes – and they had it because the men of the family after Ptolemy V were incapable of rule. It was just generation after generation of losers, so the women stepped in and took charge. Had they not done so, I think Egypt would have disintegrated far earlier. It survived because of the wise rulership of successive Cleopatras.

The reigns of the final three Cleopatras fall within a section of your book called ‘Terminal Decline’. What happened?

The biggest factor was the emergence of Rome. For almost a century, it had been unwilling to enter Egyptian politics with both feet and had instead skirted around the edges. But by the middle of the first century BC, the Seleucids had fallen and Pompey had taken over their former territories – meaning that, for the first time, the Egyptians had Romans on their land borders. The Romans, of course, were one of

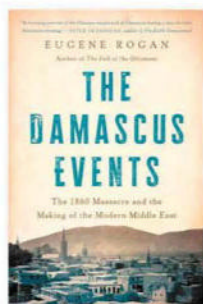


Cruel summer A depiction of Christians being massacred in Damascus in July 1860. The bloody events of that summer "marked a critical turn towards increasing western influence", writes Ryan Gingeras

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Fear and loathing in Damascus

RYAN GINGERAS praises an unsparing account of an outbreak of sectarian bloodletting that shaped the evolution of the modern Middle East



The Damascus Events: The 1860 Massacre and the Making of the Modern Middle East by Eugene Rogan
Basic Books,
400 pages, £30

In July 1860, the city of Damascus exploded. Mobs of Muslim rioters tore through neighbourhoods, burning homes, sacking businesses and murdering

Christians. The full restoration of order required both the intervention of European troops and the imposition of more direct rule from the Ottomans' imperial capital, Istanbul. It would take years for the city to recover from the physical damage wrought by the violence.

The Damascus Events, Eugene Rogan's account of that terrible summer, represents a welcome addition to the author's impressive canon of work on the history of the Arabic-speaking world. As a book grounded in decades of archival research, it adds essential insight into one of the most impor-

tant, yet least appreciated, moments in the making of the modern Levant.

The ancient city at the core of Rogan's story represents a place that is both unique and illustrative of the changes and challenges of this period in modern history. Damascus had always been a hub of commerce and politics for much of the Levant. Its historical and political significance also made it a place of international recognition and renown.

The 19th century, however, subjected Damascus to dramatic forces that were without precedent. Rogan makes clear that it

// The sum result of these conflicting forces was a wave of violence without parallel in the region's history //

was the arrival of Europeans and Americans at the start of this era that most profoundly altered the city and its people. Increased trade and cultural interaction with the west brought Damascene life into greater contact with new ideas, institutions and goods shaping the wider world.

The growing presence of newcomers from France, Britain and the United States also engendered, or widened, social divisions within the city and its surrounding lands. The region's Maronite, Catholic and Orthodox Christians tended to reap the greatest economic and political benefits of this age. Local Muslims, as well as officials from Istanbul, often looked upon this growing disparity with both loathing and anxiety. At a time when much of Asia and north Africa was succumbing to western imperialism, the future of Damascus appeared in the balance.

Origin story

Rogan traces the origins of the horrors that unfolded in the city to events further west in Lebanon. There, through the beginning of the century, rising Egyptian, French and British influence had come to upset the balance of power among provincial Muslim and Christian leaders. While Istanbul laboured to counteract this intrusion, local communities sought to capitalise on the patronage that came from abroad or from the capital. As Maronite Christians appeared to gain the upper hand, disaffected members of Lebanon's Druze minority increasingly resorted to violence. Attacks on Lebanon's Christians sent tens of thousands into exile, inflaming sectarian tensions within Damascus itself.

The sum result of these conflicting forces was a wave of violence across the city without parallel in the region's history. Events culminated in 1860 with the outbreak of civil war.

For Rogan, the 'Damascus events' signalled a pivotal moment in the making of the

modern Middle East. It marked a critical turn towards increasing amounts of governmental reform and western influence. Even though Damascenes would overcome and largely forget the tragedies of that summer, the spectre of violence would continue to linger both there and in other parts of the wider Ottoman world.

Rogan's narration of these bloody events makes it clear that there was nothing primal about the motivations and nature of the violence that wracked Damascus in the summer of 1860. They were instead the collective product of modern influences that manifested themselves in various parts of the Ottoman Middle East. He carefully notes that this tragedy in Syria was something of a bellwether for what would happen elsewhere within the Ottoman empire in the lead up to its collapse after the First World War.

Rogan is careful not to draw too many connections between the violence of the 19th century and the civil war that still rages in Syria. This decision was, arguably, a wise one: why bloodshed vexes Syria today is the outcome of far more contemporary events and trends. Nevertheless, it is not possible to read *The Damascus Events* without feeling still greater sadness for all the heartache peoples in Syria continue to endure.

A miraculous discovery

Much of what Rogan documents in *The Damascus Events* will be familiar to scholars of both Ottoman and Syrian history. Lebanon's collapse into violence in the 1860s has inspired a number of works seeking to demystify the complex origins of sectarian violence in the region.

What sets this book apart from its predecessors, however, is the original insights it offers into the experiences of Damascene residents during this tumultuous period – and the conscious attempts its author makes to weave its narrative in a personal and readable way. The book revolves around the account of one rather remarkable witness to the city's travails – an account, Rogan explains, he rather miraculously discovered many decades earlier. His choice to focus on this hitherto unknown Arabic witness endows the work with both a nuance and pathos not found in other studies of the region.

In this respect, *The Damascus Events* is an instructive addition to the field. Its exploration of what was a critical – and catastrophic – episode in the history of the Middle East is one that I hope other scholars of the Ottoman world will seek to emulate. **H**

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Ryan Gingeras is an expert on Turkish, Balkan and Middle Eastern history, and author of *The Last Days of the Ottoman Empire* (Allen Lane, 2022)

FROM FACT TO FICTION

Sailing the high seas

Francesca de Tores (pictured) discusses *Saltblood*, her novel drawing on the real life of English pirate Mary Read

How much do we know about the real Mary Read?

We have the transcript of her crew's 1720 trial, and she's named in a proclamation from Nassau's governor Woodes Rogers. Beyond that we're in the hands of the (pseudonymous) Captain Charles Johnson, whose *A General History of the Pyrates* is a gloriously entertaining but fanciful account. All these gaps in the record might be a nightmare for a historian, but they're a gift to a novelist.

What drew you to Mary's story?

I defy anyone to read a summary of her life – raised as a boy, she was then a sailor, soldier and one of only two documented women pirates of piracy's golden age – and not be entranced.

How common was it for a woman to impersonate a man and join the navy and, later, army in this period?

While we couldn't call it common, wherever gender roles have been restrictive, there have been people who find a way around them. We do know that Christian Davies (aka Kit Cavanagh) served as a man in the army in the same period. She deserves a novel of her own.

Mary then sets off to the Caribbean to become a pirate. How did you research this time and place?

While few texts deal specifically with Mary, there's a wealth of information about piracy and the period. Among the richest documents were pirates' 'ship's articles': contracts stipulating rules for conduct, division of prizes and so forth.

What new impression of Mary would you like to leave readers with?

I'd hope readers finish *Saltblood* with a sense of Mary as a resolute breaker of boundaries, who carved out a life for herself in a hostile world.

Saltblood

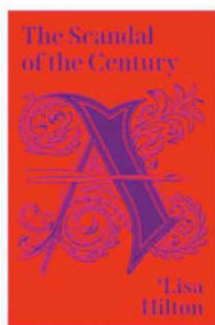
by Francesca de Tores
Bloomsbury, 368 pages, £16.99



17TH CENTURY

Dramatic tales

EMILY BRAND is gripped by a sweeping account of a trial that inspired England's first professional female writer, Aphra Behn



The Scandal of the Century
by Lisa Hilton

Michael Joseph,
352 pages, £22

In November 1682, bodies pressed into Westminster Hall for the trial of Lord Grey, who stood accused of

seducing his teenage sister-in-law Henrietta Berkeley into "whoredom and adultery". Those hoping for theatrics were not disappointed: she arrived, visibly pregnant, declaring she had eloped of her own volition. Her father, an earl, claimed ownership of her; he was in for a shock.

For playwright, sometime spy and milk punch aficionado Aphra Behn – England's first professional female writer – the affair inspired a bestselling, thinly veiled work of fiction entitled *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*. Lisa Hilton uses this momentary collision of lives as the springboard for a sparkling and eye-opening account of their 17th-century world.

One small but important quibble, which should be addressed at the start: the title and promotional material for *The Scandal of the Century* do not capture – or do justice to – the book's scope and originality. Readers may reasonably pick it up expecting an account of an adultery case in the Restoration era. Instead, the first half is devoted largely to Behn and her mysterious early life. Only then are we plunged into the scandals of Berkeley and Grey, from notorious elopement to their role in the Monmouth Rebellion. Both parts, though diverging somewhat in style and approach, are equally compelling to read.

Hilton strides confidently into the conversation about Behn, dissecting existing biographies and cleverly constructing a thought-provoking and thrilling new theory of the writer's origins. She is refreshingly transparent about the speculative nature of the enterprise, and her untangling of genealogies and archival finds – red herrings, dead ends and all – lays bare the beauty and agony of the historian's craft. Her fresh ideas could open up exciting paths for future scholars.

// We are immersed in the 'candlelight chaos' of Restoration England, sweeping through fashion, theatre and protest //

The more traditional historical narrative examining the trial and exile of Lord Grey and Berkeley lifts the curtain on an enticingly personal drama, but also uses it to illustrate much about wider attitudes and conventions of the era.

Throughout, we are immersed in the "candlelit chaos" of Restoration England, sweeping through fashion and beauty, disease, theatre, food, anti-Catholic protest and the transatlantic slave trade. But we also travel beyond the familiar: portraits of life in fledgling colonies of South America and the West Indies feel especially illuminating.

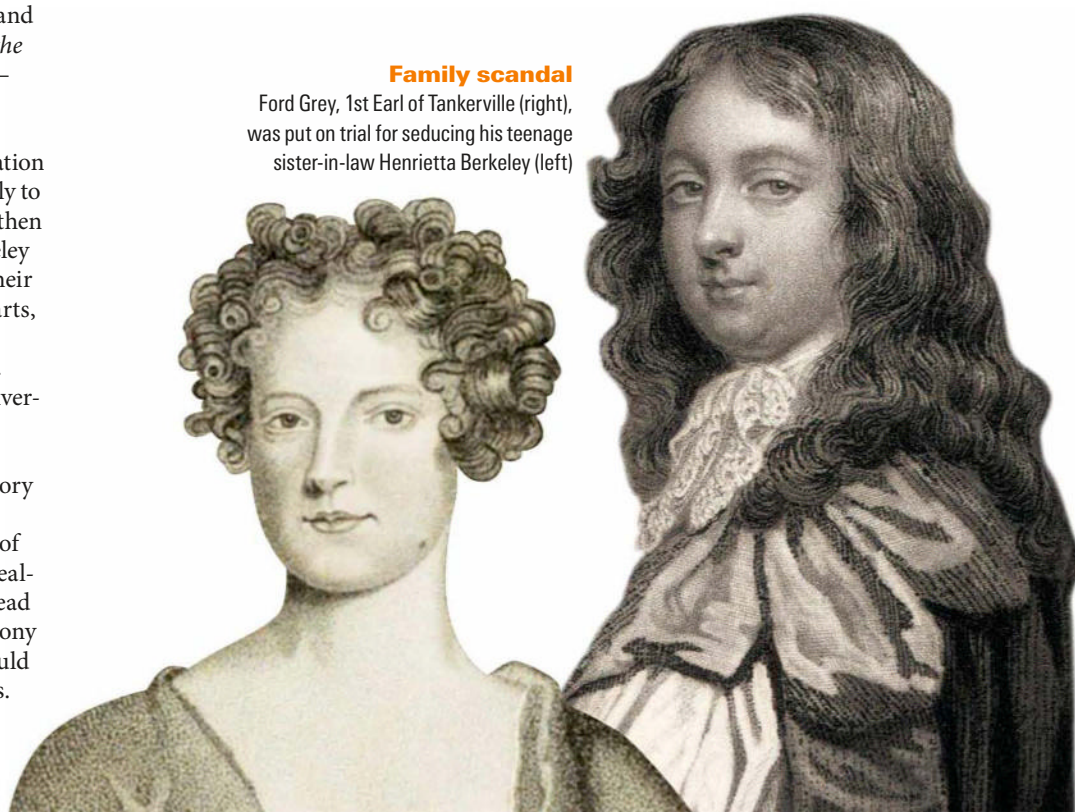
As in her earlier works, Hilton shines light on how women navigated the misogyny and participated in the political upheaval of their times. The narrative is populated with female voices, from aggrieved aristocratic sisters and incompetent servants to networks of female spies. The determined, enterprising spirit displayed by both Berkeley and Behn is only highlighted by the over-confidence of "privileged mediocrity" and sexually loaded insults of the men around them; the writer was branded a "lewd harlot" and the ungovernable daughter blasted as a "Hussey!" by her own father before the packed court.

The Scandal of the Century allows Hilton to showcase her skill for both historical detective work and compelling, evocative writing. The distant but entwined lives of Behn and Berkeley are meticulously re-examined and engagingly told, offering something for both general readers and scholars of early modern history. The Restoration is familiar as a great age of the stage; this drama is as bawdy, as troubling and as unpredictable as any. **H**

Emily Brand is a historian and author of *The Fall of the House of Byron* (John Murray, 2020)

Family scandal

Ford Grey, 1st Earl of Tankerville (right), was put on trial for seducing his teenage sister-in-law Henrietta Berkeley (left)



GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

SOCIAL

Feline adventures



Catland: Feline Enchantment and the Making of the Modern World
by Kathryn Hughes
Fourth Estate, 416 pages, £22

"Welcome to Catland."

So begins this beautifully

illustrated, wide-reaching, surprising and often quite moving exploration of the place of our enigmatic feline companions in the modern world.

It is much more than a series of encounters with our whiskered friends. The book centres on a rather tragic figure: Louis Wain. A renowned British artist, his depictions of cats in human-like scenarios featured in adverts, on postcards, on Christmas cards – and much more besides – across the years where the Victorian age gave way to a sparkling new century. Our first encounter, however, with Wain is an unexpected one. We find ourselves in a pauper's lunatic asylum in the mid-1920s, meeting him once his mind had been lost in the shadows of mental illness.

Kathryn Hughes traces Wain's life from his childhood through to his death in 1939. In doing so, she draws inspiration from the



The cats in hats A Louis Wain painting featuring three toe-tapping feline performers

evolution of Wain's art to explore changing cultural perceptions and representations of cats. The book is rich in fascinating detail and adept at situating these changes within wider historical contexts, and changing social, political, economic and cultural conditions. The (many more than nine) cultural lives of cats are united with the very human story of a man who lived, loved, suffered and died with cats, as physical companions and as inspirational figments of his imagination.

Along the way, we meet men delivering cat meat in Victorian London, breeders concerned with creating the 'perfect' cat,

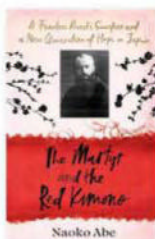
racism informing perceptions of 'Siamese' cats, cats of war, and a litany of stuffed cats (sometimes as hats). We even discover that TS Eliot *might* have drawn inspiration for his *Practical Cats* from Wain's lifetime of adventures in Catland.

A word of warning: the writing style is sometimes flowery, and this can make the text quite dense. Readers should stick with it, though. If they do, the many enchantments of Catland are well worth it. **B**

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Andrew Flack, senior lecturer in modern and environmental history at Bristol University

GLOBAL

Hope and humanity



The Martyr and the Red Kimono: A Fearless Priest's Sacrifice and a New Generation of Hope in Japan
by Naoko Abe
Chatto & Windus,
448 pages, £22

Honoured with a statue in Westminster Abbey, the Polish Catholic priest Maximilian Kolbe has become synonymous with the ideal of self-sacrifice. Imprisoned in Auschwitz during the Second World War, he volunteered to take the place of another man who had been sentenced to die. Less well known are the years he spent as a missionary in Japan, from 1930 to 1936. Here, Naoko Abe combines a telling of that story with Kolbe's impact on two remarkable Japanese men.

Tōmei Ozaki survived the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki and went on to become a Franciscan friar. Masatoshi Asari became a revered cherry tree master, uncovering the mistreatment of Korean prisoners in Hokkaido and using his craft to teach children about the importance of nurturing life.

Kolbe, Ozaki and Asari never met one another, but working with diaries, photos and other sources, alongside interviews with Ozaki and Asari, Abe sets out to show how "their lives intersected and resonated with one another" via shared experiences of "unprecedented death and suffering" alongside "hope and light... peace and reconciliation". There are echoes here of Abe's 'Cherry' Ingram, *The Englishman Who Saved Japan's Blossoms* (Vintage, 2019). Now, as then, she rather brilliantly weaves individual lives into broader Japanese and global stories. Kolbe comes across as a man of extraordinary missionary zeal with grand plans to transfer to Asia his successful media operation back home in Poland. His naivety –

learning little about Japan's religious culture before leaving Europe – was made up for by a work ethic that could be hard on his fellow friars in Japan.

A little more on the Catholic spirituality of Kolbe and Ozaki might have enhanced the sketches that Abe offers of these two men's lives. But she draws out their humanity in beautiful ways, not least via a late-life confession from Ozaki. Stumbling around the flaming ruins of Nagasaki after the bomb was dropped, he had succumbed to a feeling of superiority. "Nobody was walking in the ruins besides me. Everyone was dead or had collapsed. Except me. I hate to say it, but true human nature surfaced that day."

Ozaki held onto that devastating moment of self-revelation almost until up his death in April 2021, steadily trying to turn it – with the help of Kolbe's example – into light. **B**

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Christopher Harding, cultural historian and senior lecturer at Edinburgh University

CULTURAL

Longing for the past

HANNAH SKODA finds depth and nuance in this timely cultural history of nostalgia, tracing it from the 17th century, when the word was coined, up to the present day



**Nostalgia:
A History of a
Dangerous Emotion**
by Agnes Arnold-Forster
Picador, 272 pages, £22

We are all familiar with nostalgia and its melancholic longing for the halcyon days of yore – and knowing

that we're spinning the past to suit our needs in the present in many ways only heightens the bittersweet taste. In this fascinating book, Agnes Arnold-Forster sets herself two goals: she tracks the changing meanings of nostalgia since the invention of the word by a Swiss doctor named Johannes Hofer in 1688; and she explores the histories of how and why people have become nostalgic ever since.

Arnold-Forster guides us through the intriguing ways in which the term increasingly came to refer to a longing for lost time rather than lost place. And she explores the shift from disease to emotion in the ways in which nostalgia was discussed. She introduces us to the emergence of psychoanalysis in the late 19th century, and to developments in psychology and neuroscience during the 20th century, which further moulded the ways people have thought about nostalgia.

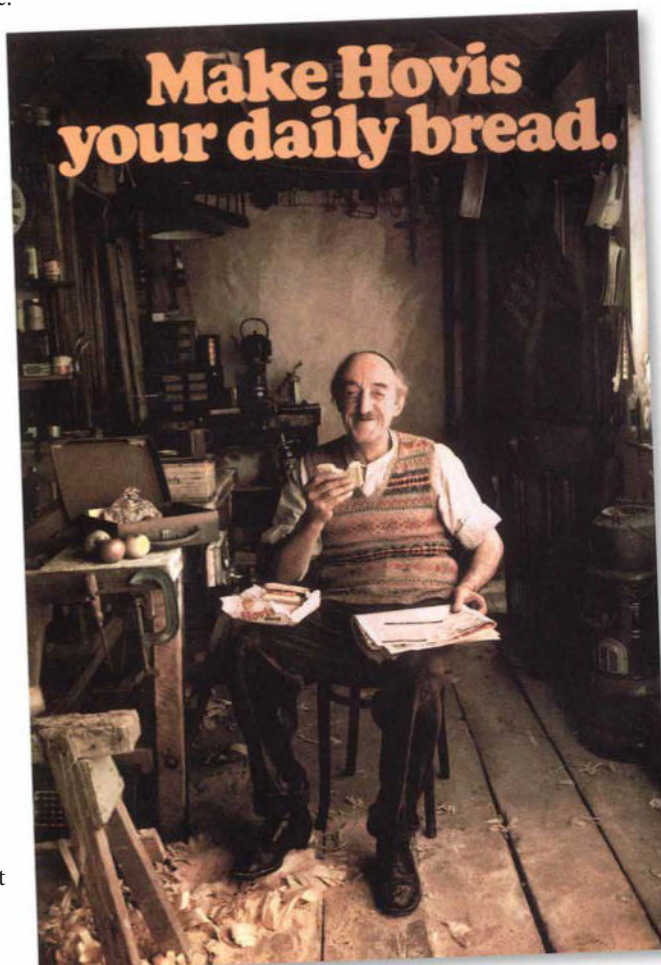
In the first few chapters, nostalgia as homesickness is explored via a series of poignant examples: a student at the University of Göttingen in 1788 longing for home; a toddler called Eugene who became almost fatally weak when separated from his wet-nurse in 1841.

But most powerfully and most tragically, we hear of the appalling suffering of enslaved people transported across the Atlantic. Subjected to a multiplicity of violences, their longing for home could prove fatal. William Wilberforce apparently evoked this nostalgia in his abolitionist appeals. But what of the ways in which enslaved people themselves expressed their

// Nostalgia is a highly effective way to manipulate people, and commercial brands use it to entice us to buy things //

Blast from the past

The 1970s saw a wave of nostalgia that Agnes Arnold-Forster explores in her new book



emotions? As Arnold-Forster points out, this is harder to explore, but should hit us at a visceral level.

Indeed – this was a period during which nostalgia was increasingly contested. It could be attributed to enslaved people in an explicitly patronising and racist way. Equally, over the course of the 20th century, sometimes it has been co-opted for noxious political ends (Arnold-Forster's exploration of Nazi nostalgias is particularly striking), sometimes in the interests of inclusivity and equity.

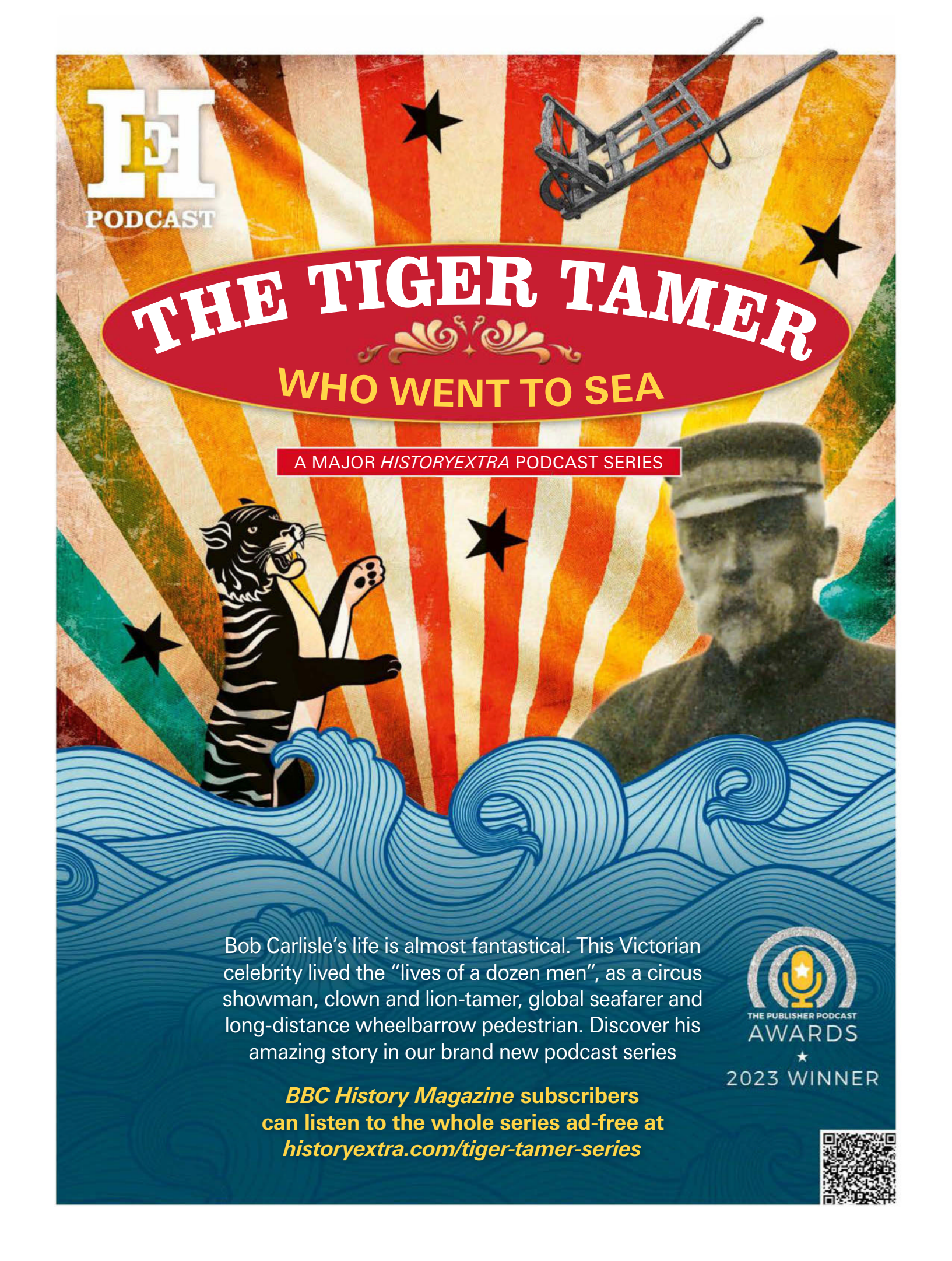
She shows how nostalgia has been used by the political right and by the left, exploring such themes as the embedding of nostalgia in discussions around the NHS. She also explores the rhetorical weaponisation of nostalgia: after the Brexit vote, Michel Barnier attributed the outcome to Britain's "nostalgia for the past". But Arnold-Forster

very perceptively explores the ways in which both the Remain campaign and the Leave campaign were shot through with nostalgia. Nostalgia is a highly effective way to manipulate us: an intriguing exploration of a nostalgia wave in the 1970s points to how commercial brands use it to entice us to buy things.

This is a very timely book. A number of other scholars have also recently discussed nostalgia: Peter Fritzsche presents this as a phenomenon emerging out of the great rupture of the French Revolution; Tobias Becker has explored waves of nostalgia post-World War II; and Hannah Rose Woods analyses the political uses of nostalgia in Britain. In many ways, nostalgia is a phenomenon to be celebrated: psychologists now are clear that it can be good for our mental wellbeing. But as Arnold-Forster so convincingly shows, it is also a feeling worth dissecting: it can open up a rich sense of community and remind us of important values, but it can also so easily be used to manipulate us. **H**

Hannah Skoda is fellow in history at St John's College, Oxford

ALAMY



THE
PODCAST

THE TIGER TAMER

WHO WENT TO SEA

A MAJOR *HISTORYEXTRA* PODCAST SERIES

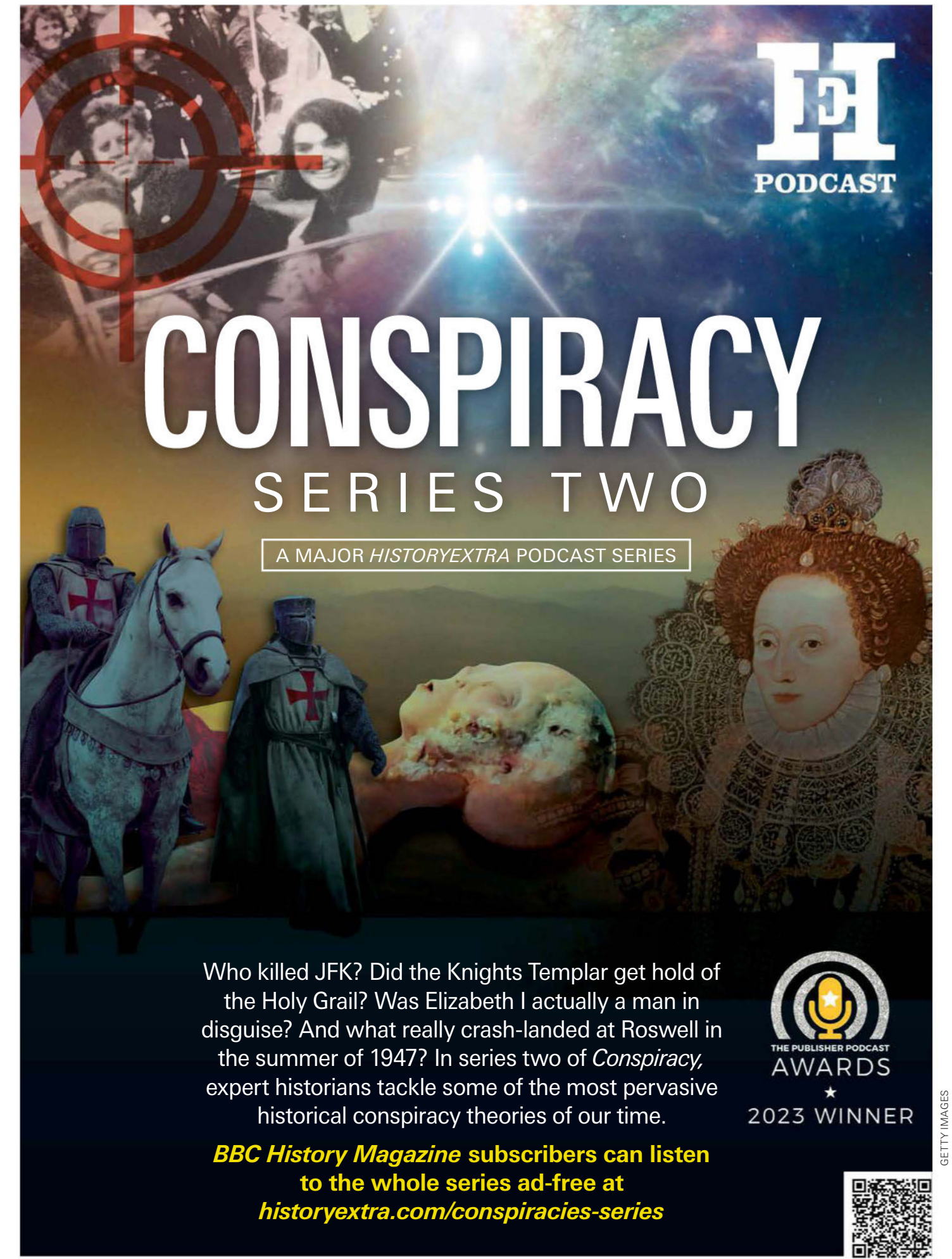
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THE PUBLISHER PODCAST
AWARDS



2023 WINNER



The garments on display in V&A Dundee's new exhibition include this women's outer kimono, known as an *uchikake*, dating from c1860–80

EXHIBITION

Fashion icon

What's the first symbol that comes to mind when you think about Japan? Mount Fuji? Cherry blossom? Or, perhaps, it's that quintessentially Japanese robe: the kimono.

V&A Dundee's latest exhibition traces the evolution of the kimono over the past 400 years, exploring its enduring sartorial and cultural significance in Japan and across the world.

Featuring rare 17th-century examples alongside designs by the likes of Alexander McQueen, the exhibition also examines the garment's role in shaping modern street fashion, revealing how young Japanese creatives are using the kimono to pay homage to their country's heritage.

Other highlights, meanwhile, include a kimono worn by Queen frontman Freddie Mercury, plus a wealth of videos, paintings, prints and film clips from the V&A archives.

Kimono: Kyoto to Catwalk

V&A Dundee / 4 May 2024–5 January 2025 / vam.ac.uk/dundee



TV

Regency romance

Once again showing us the world of Regency high society through a hyper-real lens, Netflix's global hit drama *Bridgerton* is about to return for a third series. The focus this time around is on Penelope Featherington (Nicola Coughlan).

Having (mild spoilers ahead) given up hope of her affection for Colin Bridgerton (Luke Newton) being returned, Penelope has decided it's time to marry, preferably in a match that will enable her to continue her double life as Lady Whistledown.

When Penelope's early efforts at snagging a husband don't go well, leading to a crisis of confidence, Colin offers to mentor her. Inevitably, complications ensue as Colin begins to wonder if his feelings for Penelope extend beyond friendship.

Bridgerton

Netflix / new series streaming from Thursday 16 May



Kathryn Drysdale (left) and Nicola Coughlan (right) reprise their roles as Genevieve and Penelope in *Bridgerton*'s third outing

A BBC Two series sees pals Rob Rinder (left) and Rylan (right) retracing Lord Byron's footsteps across Europe – beginning with a trip to Venice



TV

Friends abroad

The grand tour was a rite of passage similar to a modern university gap year, but far posher. Between the 17th and 19th centuries, well-to-do young Britons would travel around Europe on trips that were designed to be educational and culturally enriching, but no doubt involved a fair bit of fun along the way.

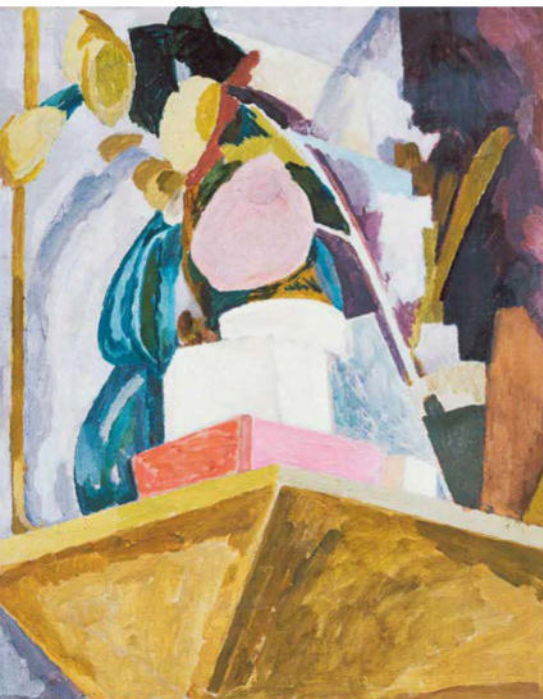
One of those who travelled to the continent was Lord Byron (1788–1824), excuse enough for friends Rob Rinder and Rylan to journey in his footsteps through Italy to mark the 200th anniversary of the poet's passing.

The duo start their European adventure among the waterways of Venice, where they both enjoy an encounter with Tintoretto's vast *Il Paradiso* canvas, and Rylan discovers what the city's annual carnival has meant to generations of gay men.

Rob and Rylan's Grand Tour

BBC Two / May

HISTORY ON THE BOX



Highlights from Tate Britain's new display include works by Bloomsbury Group painter Vanessa Bell

EXHIBITION

No longer brushed aside

Like many professions, the British art world has historically been dominated by men, with women having to fight to gain recognition for their talents. As such, the works of some of the nation's greatest painters have often flown under the radar, known by only the most ardent collectors and enthusiasts.

However, a major new exhibition at Tate Britain aims to redress the balance, shining a spotlight on the works of more than 100 pioneering female artists between 1520 and 1920. From the court miniatures of Levina Teerlinc to the battle scenes of Elizabeth Butler, the display looks at the ways in which women have forged professional artistic careers, and the opposition they have faced when tackling subjects traditionally thought to be the preserve of men.

Now You See Us: Women Artists in Britain 1520–1920

Tate Britain, London / 16 May–13 October / tate.org.uk/whats-on

"I'm trying to tell a bit of the history of the Caribbean through my own family's eyes"



BBC broadcaster **CLIVE MYRIE** tells us about his new travelogue, which takes in Cuba, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Barbados

You travel to the Caribbean for your new series. What are the themes you explore?

It was very much about trying to tell a little bit of the history of the Caribbean through my own family's eyes, and bringing in what it means to be a black Briton. So, for instance, my grandfather on my dad's side, Eugene, worked in Cuba. He probably sailed from Jamaica up to Guantanamo Bay, and initially worked within the American zone because he wouldn't have spoken Spanish. That's a direct human connection to me, but also a jumping-off point to tell a bit of the history of Cuba, exploring Castro and communism, food and salsa, and Ernest Hemingway.

Did you have a sense of the past playing into the present as you travelled around?

The past echoes through the series, because the past informs the present. In Havana, for example, we went to a garage full of classic American cars – Chevrolets and so on. There was a huge problem getting auto-parts for these cars after the revolution. As a result, a lot of these cars ended up in people's garages. I didn't see as many of these cars when I visited in 2000 as I did in 2024. What happened was, Obama opened up the country [the 'Cuban thaw', which began a normalisation of relations later suspended under Trump], and car parts came in. Now you see the cars everywhere, not just in the centre of Havana.

Do present-day US politics affect Cuba?

The Cuban-American community in Florida is a huge voting bloc when it comes to deciding American elections. As a result, their antipathy to anything to do with the regime in Havana means an embargo still exists that was put on the country in 1962. So the present and the future – who's going to be in the White House in November – is

being decided as a result of a revolution that took place in 1959. That's just bizarre.

Do you have any reflections on how past and present collide in Barbados, a former British colony that became a republic in 2021?

Prime minister Mia Mottley and the current administration believe it is possible to forge your own path. Why have a country with a head of state who wasn't even born there? That's very much the feeling in a lot of Commonwealth nations. But it is interesting that Barbados is perhaps the most culturally British Caribbean island, with an accent that is patois but also very West Country ("All roight, my lover?") You might as well be in downtown Bristol when you're in Barbados. **11**

Clive Myrie's Caribbean Adventure will be broadcast on BBC Two in late May

TWO



An American car passes a banner of Fidel Castro in Havana – a city explored in Clive Myrie's new series



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RECIPE

Sowans

ELEANOR BARNETT extols the virtues of a traditional Scottish ferment that can be used to make a porridge, a pudding and a probiotic drink

Fermented food is a fast-growing industry in the UK. Ever since the pandemic's risen sourdough loaves, many of us have rediscovered the powers of microbes to preserve food, to add new, exciting flavours to it, and to boost our overall gut health.

You will doubtless have heard of Korean kimchi, German sauerkraut and Chinese kombucha, but while undertaking research for my new book, *Leftovers: A History of Food Waste and Preservation*, I came across a less familiar – yet native – ferment called sowans, a traditional Scottish food created by fermenting oats.

A way of extracting the most value from every available food source, sowans was made from the oat hulls (or husks) left over from milling full oat groats to make ground oats. Though otherwise inedible, starchy and nutritious fragments clung to the hulls along with the bacteria needed to ignite fermentation. Given that oat hulls are hard to come by today, my recipe uses a mixture of oat brans (the outer layer of the oat groat) and rolled oats (the whole grain).

To make sowans, the oats are soaked in water and left to ferment for about a week, traditionally in a 'sowan-bowie'

– a small wooden tub with a narrow lip – but a Kilner jar or similar container also works. The contents of the bowl are poured through a cheesecloth and the remaining oat mush fed to the chickens or compost. The collected liquid is then left for a day or so as the starchy white sediment settles on the bottom. This is the sowans. Most simply, sowans can be warmed into a tangy, wholesome porridge (as shown on the right) but there are many further historical recipes, ranging from a watery and buttery dish known as 'douchrea', to sowan scones. The sour liquid poured off the sowans is known as 'swats', which can itself be consumed as a nutritious, probiotic, sharp-flavoured drink.

As a luxurious contrast to the basic porridge recipe, I turned the other half of my sowans into flummery, a sweet pudding once popular across Britain and described by the poet Gervase Markham (1568–1637) as an "excellent dish". Interestingly, the name 'flummery' comes from the Welsh word *llymru*, which itself referred to a Welsh oat ferment similar to sowans, but made with added buttermilk and served in the summer months.

As with all fermenting, this recipe requires some adaptability. The time it will take to ferment is dependent upon the microbial make-up of the grain (I'd recommend using an organic grain because the 'good' bacteria might have been killed off by pesticides and fungicides), and you can experiment with making the sowans thicker or thinner by adjusting how much fresh water or milk is added at the cooking stage. The amounts shown in my recipe will make around 150ml of sowans. The sowans can also be preserved for several months prior to cooking by pouring off the swats and adding fresh water, so you can make it in bulk if you prefer.

Like many other ferments, this versatile and thrifty home-grown foodstuff died out over the course of the 20th century, as we became distanced from the traditional food production and preservation systems that had sustained past generations. Perhaps it is now finally due a revival. **H**



Makes: 1 serving porridge,
1 serving flummery

Difficulty: 2/10

Time taken: 30 minutes (plus around 1 week fermentation)

INGREDIENTS

160g oat bran
80g rolled oats
c500ml water

For porridge

c125ml water
1 tbsp golden syrup (optional)

For flummery

c120ml milk
1 tbsp sugar
2 tbsp whipped cream
¼ orange zest

METHOD

1. Cover the oats with the water (leaving a couple of inches above them) in a preserving jar.
2. Leave to ferment for about a week, stirring to keep the oats submerged if needed, and checking every couple of days until the liquid tastes sour.



Fermented foods that could keep for long periods of time were essential for the poor in times of scarcity



Sowans can not only be used to make flummery (left) or porridge (below right), but the excess liquid, or 'swats', can also be consumed as a drink (below left)



3. Strain the liquid through a cheesecloth into a bowl, squeezing the oat mush of moisture.
4. Return the liquid to the jar and leave for 1–2 days until the white sediment has finished settling on the bottom.
5. Strain off the liquid swats to consume as a drink (you can save it in the fridge).

To make porridge

1. Add the fresh water to 75ml sowans and heat for around 5 minutes until thickened.
2. Serve as porridge with the optional golden syrup, or however else you like your porridge.

To make flummery

1. Add the milk and sugar to 75ml sowans and heat for around 5 minutes until thickened.
2. Lightly grease a cup and add the cooked sowans.
3. Cool in the fridge overnight.
4. Empty onto a plate and top with whipped cream and grated orange zest.



Eleanor Barnett is a food historian at Cardiff University and @Historyeats on Instagram. Her new book, *Leftovers: A History of Food Waste and Preservation* (Apollo), is out now

GETTY IMAGES/BBC PICTURES/ELEANOR BARNETT



A landmark recording by cellist Beatrice Harrison is the focus of a new BBC Radio 3 programme

RADIO

Musical milestone

Beatrice Harrison (1892–1965) was a classical music superstar whose myriad career highlights included making the first recording of Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto, with the great man himself conducting. And yet it's for an altogether stranger moment in musical history that she is most often remembered.

It was Harrison who, a century ago in May 1924, duetted with a nightingale from a Surrey wood for the BBC,

the first ever wildlife outside broadcast. Latterly, however, it has been suggested that fakery was involved.

Writer and musician Kate Kennedy investigates what really happened, as well as tracing Harrison's brilliant career and her bohemian upbringing within British high society.

Sunday Feature: The Cello and the Nightingale

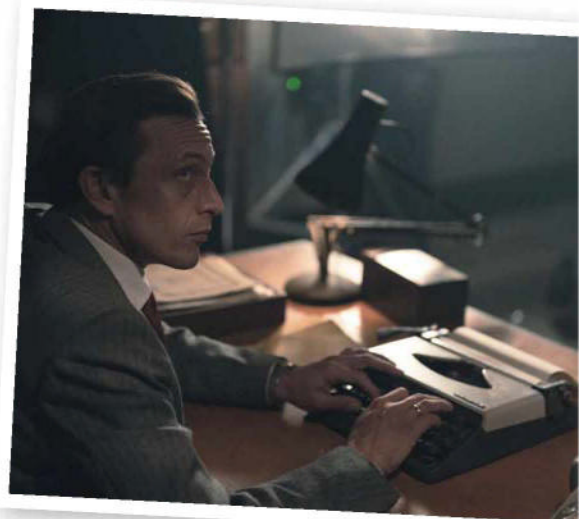
BBC Radio 3 / Sunday 19 May

TV

Double dealing

In the summer of 1982, KGB agent Oleg Gordievsky was assigned to London. Here, partly as a result of his success in ferreting out valuable information, he enjoyed rapid promotions. But all was not as it seemed. Gordievsky was a double agent, and MI6 was furnishing him with valuable contacts and 'secrets'.

Over three episodes, *Secrets and Spies: The Nuclear Game* traces Gordievsky's career as it played out during the last days of the Cold War, an era when it sometimes seemed as if nuclear conflict might be imminent. The series also follows the trajectory of another man with mixed allegiances, Aldrich Ames, the CIA's head of Soviet counter-intelligence.



Martin Munro stars as double agent Oleg Gordievsky in a major new BBC Two series

Secrets and Spies: The Nuclear Game

BBC Two and BBC iPlayer / May

TV

On the run

In 1974, Black Panther leader Huey P Newton (1942–89) was in serious trouble. Accused of the murder of a trafficked teenage sex worker, Kathleen Smith (and facing a charge of assault against his tailor), he was confronted with the prospect of a long spell in jail.

Newton's solution was to enlist the assistance of *Easy Rider* producer Bert Schneider and head for Cuba, as detailed in a 2012 *Playboy* article by journalist Joshua Bearman, who also wrote the story on which the Iran hostage drama *Argo* was based.

Starring André Holland as Newton, Apple TV+ series *The Big Cigar* explores what might have happened – a tale so incredible as to be barely believable.

The Big Cigar

Apple TV+ / streaming from Friday 17 May



André Holland, best known for the Oscar-winning drama *Moonlight*, plays the lead role in a six-part series about Huey P Newton's escape to Cuba in 1974



A display at IWM Duxford's 2023 Summer Air Show. This year's event will mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day

EVENT

Sky salute

IWM Duxford's Summer Air Show is always a popular fixture in the aviation calendar, but this year's event is set to be a particularly grand affair.

On 1–2 June, visitors to the airfield will be treated to a special series of flypasts to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day, with both days featuring a fleet of vintage Dakotas – the aircraft synonymous with the airborne landings. Those attending on day one will be able to watch a mass parachute jump

featuring more than 100 participants, while the schedule for day two includes a display from the Red Arrows.

As in previous years, ticket holders will also have access to a wide range of talks and on-ground displays, as well as the museum hangars and regular indoor exhibits.

Duxford Summer Air Show: D-Day 80

IWM Duxford, Cambridgeshire / 1–2 June / iwm.org.uk/airshows

TV

First-hand testimony

What was it like to live through D-Day? A new three-part documentary series marking the 80th anniversary of the landings takes viewers back to 1944 by collating audio recordings featuring those who were there – not just the troops who came ashore, but German soldiers and French civilians, too.

In the same style as the acclaimed *AIDS: The Unheard Tapes* (2022), this first-hand testimony is lip-synced by young actors, an approach that brings colour to an event that seems increasingly distant as the last few veterans pass away.

The series forms part of a wider season of programmes across the BBC, each focusing on events during the latter stages of the Second World War. **H**

D-Day: The Unheard Tapes

BBC Two / June



A Canadian soldier stands in front of German prisoners on Juno beach, June 1944. A new series tells the story of D-Day from all sides

GETTY IMAGES/IWM/APPLE TV



Listen ad-free at [historyextra.com/podcast](https://www.historyextra.com/podcast) or with ads wherever you get your podcasts

SOUTH AMERICA



Aztec imaginings

From the power of magical gems to theories about death and the afterlife, the Aztec belief system is a fascinating one, as **Camilla Townsend** reveals by delving into the civilisation's myths and legends.

SECOND WORLD WAR



Battles for recognition

In our new five-part series, military historian **James Holland** answers questions about the most pivotal clashes of the Second World War – and considers what might have happened had things gone differently.

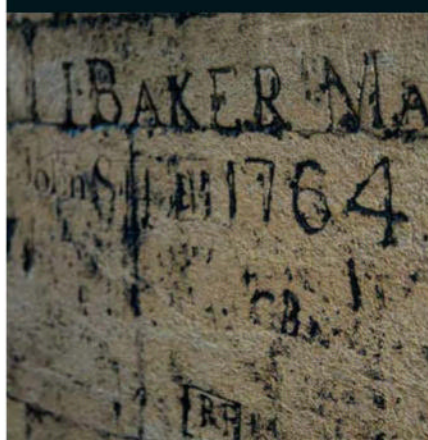
CRIMINAL HISTORY



Stand and deliver

Were highwaymen really dashing gents, or just violent petty criminals? **Robert Shoemaker** busts the myths surrounding these bandits in an *Everything You Wanted to Know About* episode.

GEORGIAN BRITAIN



Writing on the wall

In the 18th century, Britain was shaken up by a radical form of self-expression: graffiti. **Madeleine Pelling** explains what the boom in scratched missives and scribbled messages can reveal about everyday life in a turbulent age.

ANCIENT GREECE



This is Sparta

Famed for its martial prowess and austere living, Sparta is remembered as one of the ancient world's most formidable states. In this *Everything You Wanted to Know About* episode, **Paul Cartledge** examines the history of Sparta and its people.

MUSIC HISTORY

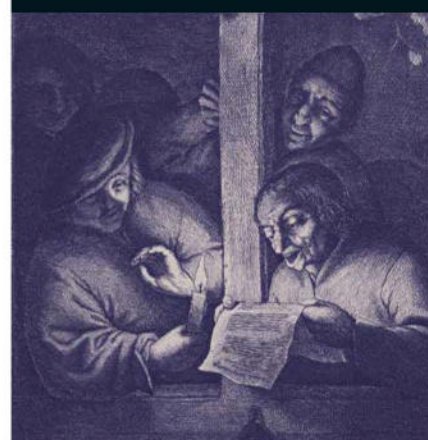


Chart-toppers

Who were the Taylor Swift and Harry Styles of the 17th century? And what were the era's smash hit songs? **Christopher Marsh** and **Angela McShane** discuss their new research project, which aims to bring popular historical ballads back to life.

A world of its own

Orkney is often described as 'remote' but that's all a question of perspective, says **PETER MARSHALL**. This beautiful archipelago has an extraordinary, well-preserved Neolithic heritage and was once central to a Norse earldom

The islands cluster close to the Scottish mainland, but tourists disembarking in Stromness harbour, or at the airport just outside the island capital of Kirkwall, sense they have arrived somewhere different to other parts of Scotland. Orkney – visitors are politely advised not to refer to 'the Orkneys' – has always been a world to itself. For centuries, inhabitants routinely called it 'the country of Orkney', and the largest of its 70-odd islands has always simply been known as 'the Mainland'.

Evidence of the past here is inescapable. Over millennia, people farmed the same stretches of fertile coastal land, a lived environment defined by the ubiquity of the sea. The word usually used to describe Orkney is 'remote', but remoteness is relative, and 'centres' can relocate over time.

The earliest sites testify to a dynamic society that can hardly be seen as clinging to the outer edge. The remarkable Neolithic village of Skara Brae, revealed by a 19th-century sandstorm, was one of many such settlements, whose inhabitants enjoyed a sophisticated communal life. They buried their dead in elaborate cairns like the great mound of Maeshowe, and gathered for religious or political purposes at the Ness of Brodgar, where for the past 20 or so years archaeologists have been excavating a complex of ritual buildings. Nearby is the imposing Ring of Brodgar: many scholars now believe Orkney to have been the starting point of a stone-circle culture, whose influence radiated throughout Britain, and inspired the construction of Stonehenge.

Orkney's centrality in the early Middle Ages is certain. The islands were settled by Norwegian Vikings, and became the headquarters of a powerful Norse earldom,

encompassing Shetland and a large section of mainland Scotland – an explanation for why one of Britain's most northerly counties is Sutherland, the southern land.

Kirkwall's exquisite Romanesque cathedral is an impressive legacy from this era, constructed around the same time as Durham's by some of the same master stonemasons. It was built to house the shrine of St Magnus, a murdered 12th-century Orkney earl, whose cult traversed the Scandinavian world.

Cash shortage

Politically, Orkney shifted from a Scandinavian to Scottish orbit in 1468, when Christian I of Denmark-Norway married his daughter to James III. He lacked the full dowry in cash and chose to mortgage the islands, along with Shetland, for the remainder. It produced no overnight transformation: a version of Norwegian law pertained in Orkney through to the 17th century, and a variant of Old Norse, known as 'Norn', was spoken well into the 18th. Kings of Denmark, meanwhile, continued to insist that the transfer was a temporary arrangement, and for two centuries and more made serious diplomatic efforts to recover the islands.

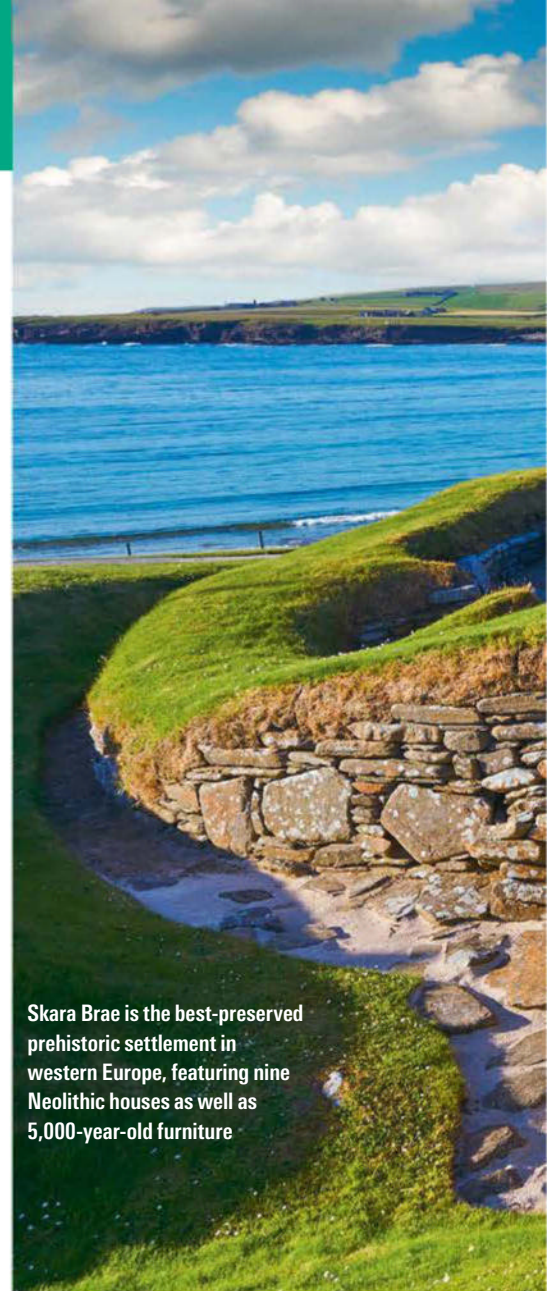
Monuments to Scottish 'colonisation' can be found in the remains of two elegant Renaissance palaces, at Birsay on the Mainland's Atlantic coast and in Kirkwall. They were built by Earl Robert Stewart, an illegitimate son of James V, and his own son Earl Patrick, who earned a local reputation as a cruel tyrant. But most immigrants to Orkney have quietly acclimatised to island ways of doing things.

In the past 200 years, Orkney has settled into a position on the periphery, geographical as well as political, of the British state. But for people who live there, it remains very much the heart and centre. **H**

Peter Marshall is a historian at Warwick University and author of *Storm's Edge: Life, Death and Magic in the Islands of Orkney* (William Collins, 2024)



For more information about visiting Orkney head to orkney.com



Skara Brae is the best-preserved prehistoric settlement in western Europe, featuring nine Neolithic houses as well as 5,000-year-old furniture



Known as the 'Light of the North', St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall is the UK's most northerly cathedral. It was founded in 1137

// Many scholars now believe Orkney to have been the starting point of a stone-circle culture //



The Maeshowe chambered cairn is one of Orkney's elaborate Neolithic graves



The Ness of Brodgar Neolithic complex was discovered in 2003 and archaeologists have been excavating it ever since

Granada in five places

The last great Moorish capital of Al-Andalus became a Spanish imperial powerhouse. **ELIZABETH DRAYSON** picks five hidden gems of the Andalusian city

1 Monument to Boabdil Reconciling with the past

In a spot south of the touristed sights of the Alhambra and old centre, tucked away on Paseo del Violón near the modern conference centre, is a poignant monument recalling one of the pivotal moments in Granada's history. Here, shaded by palms and flanked by orange trees, a bronze statue of a young girl proffers a flower to a seated, turbaned man. He is Abu Abdallah Muhammad XI, known to the Spanish as Boabdil – the 23rd and final sultan of Granada, the last ruler of Moorish Al-Andalus, who relinquished the keys to his city to Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile.

It was reputedly near this spot on 2 January 1492 that Boabdil gave the Christian monarchs the “keys to paradise”, as he is supposed to have called them, before departing into exile. This statue by sculptor Juan Moreno Aguado, inaugurated in 1997, embodies the spirit of reconciliation. The accompanying plaque sums up the whole history of Granada, reading: “From Granada to King Boabdil, in memory of centuries of culture, civilisation and tolerance.”



A bronze sculpture by Juan Moreno Aguado pays tribute to Muhammad XI of Granada



The gardens of Granada's Great Mosque boast a beautiful view over the valley towards the Alhambra

2 Mezquita Mayor de Granada Reviving Moorish heritage

Delve into the rabbit-warren of alleys crammed onto the hillside beneath the mighty Alhambra, and you'll get more than a whiff of its medieval past. The Albaicín district was the old Moorish quarter of Granada, and it still retains something of the feel of a Moroccan medina (walled city). You'll see north African goods for sale in the streets, you'll hear Arabic voices and you can eat in Moroccan restaurants. Importantly, you can also visit the first mosque built in Spain for over five centuries since the culmination of the so-called Reconquista in 1492, when the final sultan, Boabdil, was expelled from Granada by Christian forces.

Opened in 2003, the fountain-cooled garden of the Great Mosque provides wonderful views across to the Alhambra on its hilltop perch. Visitors can experience Granada's living Islamic heritage – and not just the geometric designs, two-tiered arches and kaleidoscopic *zellij* mosaic tiles typical of Moorish architecture. Today, many Muslims live in the city, and worship and study at the mosque.

3 Casa Mariana Pineda A liberal woman's sacrifice

On the corner of Calle Águila at No 19 is a plaque indicating Casa Mariana Pineda. The building is now the European Women's Centre, but the house is notable as the last home of a young woman who fought for liberal values at a time when the despot Ferdinand VII violently repressed any opposition to his absolutist rule.

Widowed at 18, with two children, Mariana Pineda joined the liberal cause, helping a captain who'd been involved in an uprising to escape from prison. During a search of this house in 1831, a flag was discovered with the slogan: 'Equality, Freedom and Law'.

Arrested and accused of conspiracy against the crown, Pineda refused to betray her comrades and was executed by garrote, her flag burned before her. A quarter of a century later, her remains were reinterred in Granada Cathedral, beneath a stone celebrating her defiance of tyranny.



ALAMY

4 Andalusia's Museum of Memory The way way back

Though the best-known episodes in Granada's story followed the founding of the first Muslim settlement on the site in AD 711, the history of the wider region of Andalusia stretches back much farther – back, in fact, to Neolithic times.

This museum on the Avenida de la Ciencia (Avenue of Science), housed in a spectacular modern building, recreates the various landscapes, flora and fauna of the region. And there are row upon row of wooden boxes that you can open and then touch and smell the contents: soils, crops, types of wood, flowers and so on. You'll also meet a variety of historical personages standing in glass cases as if they're alive – they talk to you, recounting their daily lives. It's an extraordinary place.



4

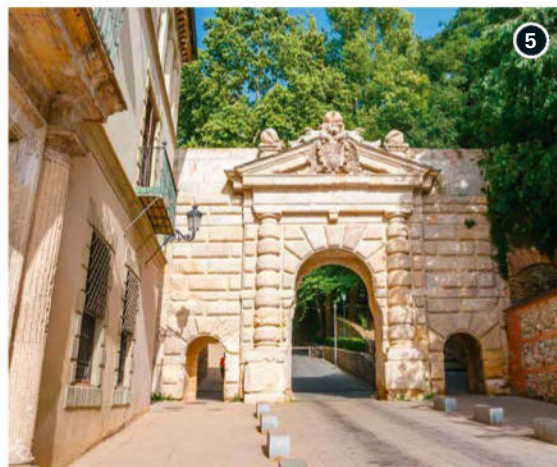
The elliptical courtyard of the Museum of Andalusian Memory, which was built in 2009



3

Mariana Pineda in chapel on the eve of her execution in May 1831, as painted in 1862 by Juan Antonio Vera Calvo

The three stone pomegranates on top of this 16th-century triumphal arch give the gateway its name



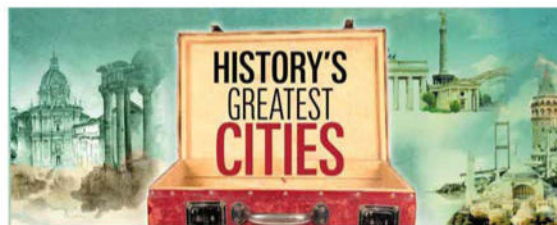
5

5 Gate of the Pomegranates What's in a name?

Any visitor to Granada will soon notice pomegranates everywhere. There are lots of pomegranate trees in the city, but more importantly there are representations of the fruit on drain covers, on the plaques of street names, on fountains, on manhole covers, on paving stones. That's because the word Granada means 'pomegranate' in Spanish. These images evoke the name and essence of the city, but also its diverse history – because the pomegranate is a fruit with symbolic meaning for Christians, Jews and Muslims alike.

The arch called the Gate of the Pomegranates, at the entrance to the Alhambra Forest – an access point to the Nasrid Palace in that monumental complex – is one of the most striking examples. It was built in the style of a Roman triumphal arch for Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who also constructed a huge Renaissance palace within the Alhambra itself. But keep an eye out and you'll see pomegranates large and small all over the city. **H**

Elizabeth Drayson is emeritus fellow in Spanish at Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge, and author of *Lost Paradise: The Story of Granada* (Bloomsbury, 2021). She was speaking to travel writer Paul Bloomfield, the host of our podcast series, *History's Greatest Cities*

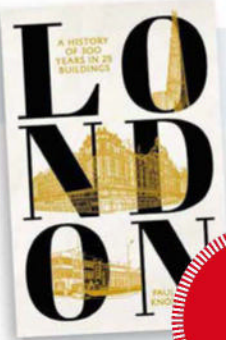


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London: A History of 300 Years in 25 Buildings By Paul Knox

From churches and council houses to soaring skyscrapers, Paul Knox's new book examines the history of Britain's capital through 25 key buildings. In doing so, it not only sheds light on London's diverse architectural heritage, but also on topics such as migration, gentrification and inequality.

Across

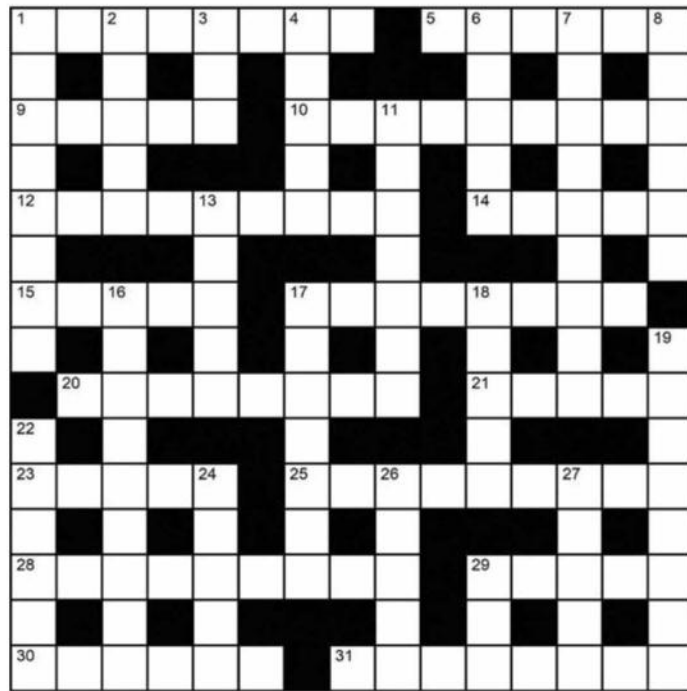
- 1 Name of German family who built an 'empire' in central Europe from the late Middle Ages to 1918 (8)
- 5 An old form of public punishment, persisting in England into the late 1800s (6)
- 9 A masterless samurai warrior in feudal Japan (5)
- 10 Anthony ____, to whom Mary, Queen of Scots wrote what came to be known as the 'Gallows Letter' (9)
- 12 Pioneering African-American investigative reporter born in 1862 (3,1,5)
- 14 One of a pair of armed robbers who went on a crime spree during the 1930s Depression (5)
- 15 'Lost village' on Salisbury Plain, evacuated in 1943 by the War Office for training purposes (5)
- 17 Carolyn ____, writer on modern British social and cultural history (8)
- 20 A medieval professional musician or other entertainer who often travelled widely (8)
- 21 Israeli political party that first came to power in 1977, under Menachem Begin (5)
- 23 Sir Arthur ____, British archaeologist who excavated Knossos between 1900 and 1931 (5)
- 25 Culturally distinct Iron Age tribe of what is now Dorset and parts of Wiltshire and Somerset (9)
- 28 Preserved bog body found in Cheshire in 1984, nicknamed 'Pete Marsh' by the local press (6,3)
- 29 Member of a Germanic people, who, with the Jutes and Saxons, invaded Britain in the fifth century AD (5)
- 30 Landlocked East African country that experienced a brutal civil war between October 1990 and July 1994 (6)
- 31 Mythological Greek hero and central figure of Homer's *Iliad* (8)

Down

- 1 Mythological wife of Romulus who helped bring peace between the Romans and the Sabines (8)
- 2 Hastings ____, first prime minister and president of Malawi (5)
- 3 First name of the English dramatist who, in 1637, became the first (and only) person to be buried upright in Westminster Abbey (3)



Do you know the name commonly given to this bog body found in Cheshire in 1984? (28 Across)



- 4 Term often used interchangeably with 'Confederate' in a US Civil War context (5)
- 6 A 'unisex' garment commonly worn in ancient Rome (5)
- 7 Famous clipper built in Dumbarton, Scotland, for the China tea trade (5,4)
- 8 Margaret ____, writer, nurse and founder of the US birth control movement in the early 20th century (6)
- 11 James ____, Scottish lawyer and diarist best known for writing a biography of his friend Samuel Johnson (7)
- 13 German city associated with an edict issued by Charles V in 1521, declaring Martin Luther a heretic (5)
- 16 A symbol of a country, dating back to Roman times, and (since 1694) of the Bank of England (9)
- 17 Form of bondage to a lord and the working of the lord's land, commonly associated with medieval Europe (7)
- 18 Jan Vermeer's birthplace, renowned for its pottery (5)
- 19 Mythical Greek hero, king of Ithaca (8)
- 22 German astronomer who formulated and verified the laws of planetary motion (6)
- 24 ____, code name of the easternmost of the five landing beaches on D-Day (5)
- 26 Relating to letters of early Germanic alphabet (5)
- 27 Ukrainian-born writer who pioneered the tradition of 19th-century Russian realism (5)
- 29 ____ Pasha, 18th and 19th century Albanian leader remembered as the 'Lion of Janina' (3)

Compiled by **Eddie James**

HOW TO ENTER

- Open to residents of the UK (& Channel Islands). Post entries to **BBC History Magazine, June 2024 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA** or email them to **June2024@historycomps.co.uk** by 5pm on 5 June 2024.
- Entrants must supply full name, address and phone number. The winners will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. Winners' names will appear in the August 2024 issue. By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in full in the box below. Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will use personal details in accordance with the Immediate Privacy Policy at <https://policies.immediate.co.uk/privacy>.
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Solution to our April 2024 crossword

Across 1 Sabratha 5 Osiris 10 Mumps 11 Barcelona 12 Rosenberg 13 Trent 14 Anselm 16 Arundel 18 Knossos 21 Dmitri 24 Chain 25 Singapore 27 Rastafari 28 Hanoi 29 Mendel 30 Guineas
Down 1 Sumerian 3 Arsenal 4 Hobbes 6 Smeaton 7 Roosevelt 8/2 Smart bombs 9 Kruger 15 Sun Yat-sen 16 ATS 17 Tiberius 19 Santa Fe 20 Ossian 22 Maathai 23 Anning 24 Coram 26 Ounce

Four winners of *How the World Made the West* by Josephine Quinn:

Linda Arbuckle, Darlington; Lili Hurst, Kendal; RW Knox, North Shields; John Richards, Abingdon

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- The winning entrants will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. The prize and number of winners will be as shown on the Crossword page. There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Immediate Media Company London decision is final and no correspondence relating to the competition will be entered into. The winners will be notified by post within 20 days of the close of the competition. The name and county of residence of the winners will be published in the magazine within two months of the closing date. If the winner is unable to be contacted within one month of the closing date, Immediate Media Company London Limited reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner-up.
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**July issue on sale
6 June 2024**



Woman at war

Daisy Dunn tells the story of the fifth-century BC Greco-Persian Wars from a female perspective



Dinner's served

Deborah Sugg Ryan takes a tour through 20th-century British kitchens



The greatest WWII raid

Max Hastings reveals how luck and heroism combined to make 1942's Operation Biting a stunning success

A pioneering princess

Ruby Lal introduces a groundbreaking author who was also the daughter of a Mughal emperor



Fighting the slave traders

Mary Wills examines the complex history of Britain's West Africa Squadron

A new era

Susan Doran explains how England was transformed by the arrival of the Stuarts



MY HISTORY HERO

Broadcaster Natasha Kaplinsky chooses

Eglantyne Jebb

1876–1928



"I'm proud to follow in her footsteps and speak out about children's issues," says Natasha Kaplinsky about Save the Children founder Eglantyne Jebb

IN PROFILE

Eglantyne Jebb was a British social reformer who founded the charity Save the Children with her sister Dorothy Buxton in 1919, initially to raise money for hungry children in Germany and Austria following the First World War. She went on to become one of the world's most influential champions of children's rights and drafted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the League of Nations in 1924, and adopted in an extended form by the United Nations in 1959.

// Jebb selflessly dedicated her life and defied convention, and even the law, to save children's lives after seeing the effects of famine **//**

When did you first hear about Jebb? I've been a Save the Children ambassador for over a decade and have had the privilege to be involved in the incredible work that the organisation, which she started all those years ago, still does today. The more I learn about her, the more I admire her.

Natasha Kaplinsky OBE has presented the news on BBC One, ITV, Channel 5 and Sky News. A patron of several charities, she is president of the British Board of Film Classification and a Save the Children ambassador

What kind of woman was she? Eglantyne was born into a well-off Shropshire family, with a strong social conscience, and was actively involved with the Charity Organisation Society – which sought to bring a modern, scientific approach to charity – before setting up Save the Children. She had a vision: to achieve and protect the rights of children worldwide. She was driven by the belief that all children – whoever they are, wherever they are – have the right to a healthy, happy, fulfilling life. Moreover, she believed change was within reach with courage, determination, imagination and good organisation. She was a pioneer, leader and activist known as the 'White Flame' for her burning commitment, passion and conviction. A true visionary, she made the world see that children have rights.

What made her a hero? She selflessly dedicated her life and defied convention, and even the law, to save children's lives after seeing the effects of the devastating famine following the First World War. And it was her respect for children that, five years later, led her to pioneer the then revolutionary concept of children's human rights.

At the 1924 League of Nations convention in Geneva, she presented her Declaration of the Rights of the Child to world leaders: "The child that is hungry must be fed, the child that is sick must be nursed, the child that is backward must be helped, the delinquent child must be reclaimed, and the orphan and the waif must be sheltered." It was adopted a year later, and subsequently in an extended form by the United Nations. The declaration later inspired the landmark 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

What was her finest hour? Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy launched their Save the Children Fund at the Royal Albert Hall in May 1919, and the audience was poised to retaliate and oppose their vision [because they were seeking to aid countries that Britain had recently fought]. But Eglantyne's speech was a moment in history, conveying with gravitas her passion. They were overwhelmed with donations and Save the Children was created. It went on to embody their vision to support millions of children around the world.

What would you ask her if you could meet her? I would thank her for the foundations she laid for how the world views and protects children today. I would ask: "What would be your advice to anyone wanting to make a difference for children in this world, so future generations can grow up healthy, safe and in learning?" **H**



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